

THE DISSOLUTION OF CONSTITUTIONS

Aristotle in Italian Political Thought
from Niccolò Machiavelli to Giovanni Botero

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Michaelmas 2015

NICOLAS STONE VILLANI

St. Hugh's College, University of Oxford

For my mother and my fiancée
and
in memoriam
R.J.S.

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This thesis studies the reception of Aristotle's political thought in sixteenth-century Italy. It focuses on Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions in Book 5 of the *Politics* and aims to show how Aristotle's political thought remained central to late Renaissance political discourse. No comprehensive study of the topic exists. Modern historiography on Renaissance political thought generally downplays the importance of Aristotle in the history of sixteenth-century Italian political thought and emphasises the Roman tradition over the Greek. This research aims to fill the gap in modern scholarship and revise modern interpretation of Renaissance political theory. This thesis is essentially divided into three parts, each part containing two chapters. Part I is largely introductory. Chapter 1 offers a historiographical review of modern scholarship on the reception of Aristotle in the Renaissance and early-modern political thought. Chapter 2 explores the revival of Greek studies in the fifteenth century and the changing perception of Aristotle's *Politics* in the Renaissance. Part II focuses on Aristotle and Machiavelli. Chapter 3 examines the similarities between Aristotle's analysis of the means of preserving tyranny and Machiavelli's discussion of how to *mantenere lo stato* in *The Prince*. Chapter 4 explores the effects that these similarities between Aristotle and Machiavelli had on the reception of Aristotle in Renaissance political thought. Part III centres on Aristotle in the republican and vernacular traditions. Chapter 5 explains the importance of Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions to Renaissance republican political thought. Chapter 6 underlines the continuous relevance of Aristotle's *Politics* in the second half of the sixteenth century. The conclusion sums up the central argument of each chapter and invites us to explore the influence of Aristotle on reason of state literature.

Extended Abstract

This thesis examines the reception of Aristotle's political ideas in late Renaissance political thought, that is roughly between Niccolò Machiavelli's (1469–1527) *The Prince*, written in 1513, and Giovanni Botero's (1544–1617) *Della ragion di stato* (*On the Reason of State*), published in 1589. It focuses on Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions in Book 5 of the *Politics* and explores (1) the relationship between Aristotle's tyrant and Machiavelli's prince, (2) the impact of this relationship on the reception of Aristotle's *Politics* in the sixteenth century, (3) the importance of Aristotle's discussion of means of preserving the state for Renaissance republicanism, and (4) the plethora of Renaissance vernacular translations of and commentaries on Aristotle's *Politics* and their relationship to reason of state literature.

Chapter 1 explores the importance attached to republicanism (also known as civic humanism) in modern historiography and traces the obsession to Hans Baron's *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* of 1955 and his interpretation of Jacob Burkhardt's rejection of the *Machstaat* (power state) and clear-cut division between Middle Ages and Renaissance articulated in *Die Culture der Renaissance in Italien* of 1860. The chapter also highlights the influence of Quentin Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* of 1978 and his neo-Roman thesis concerning modern scholarship on Renaissance political thought and examines some of the assumptions that underlie his interpretation of the political theory of the Renaissance. In particular, it challenges his popular view that republicanism was the dominant ideology of the period and uses James Hankins's and Eric Nelson's recent claims that the political theory of the Renaissance was far more pluralist than hitherto thought in order to argue for the need to study more in depth the reception of Aristotle and especially Book 5 of the *Politics* in Renaissance political thought.

Chapter 2 examines the changing attitude towards Aristotle's political thought in the fifteenth century in the context of, first, changing attitudes towards ethics in the fourteenth century illustrated by Petrarch (1304–74) in his *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* (*On His Own*

Ignorance and That of Many Others) of 1370 and, then, the revival of Greek studies in the West brought about by the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras' (1355–1415) arrival in Florence in 1397. It does so through the prism of the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the Renaissance and focuses on Leonardo Bruni's (1370–1444) *Vita Aristotelis* (*Life of Aristotle*) of 1429 and his two letters of 1437–8 to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (1390–1447) and Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) that preface his Latin translation of the *Politics*. The chapter highlights Bruni's appreciation of the empirical nature of Aristotle's political thought and underlines some of the similarities between Bruni's interpretation of the *Politics* and Machiavelli's method in *The Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy* of 1531.

Chapter 3 looks at early perceptions of Machiavelli as a reader of Book 5 of the *Politics* and explores the relationship between Aristotle's tyrant and Machiavelli's prince through Innocent Gentillet's (1535–88) *Anti-Machiavel* (*Discourse against Machiavelli*) of 1576. Aristotle identifies two ways of preserving tyrannies: one by violent and wicked means; the other by simulating kingship and eschewing despotism. Early readers of Machiavelli usually drew links between the first method and Machiavelli, as evidenced by Bernardo Segni (1504–58) in his *Trattato dei governi* (*Treatise on Governments*) of 1549. On close inspection, however, Machiavelli may be shown to endorse both means of preserving tyrannies and to argue that a new prince must follow the first method in establishing his rule, but switch to the second in order to maintain it. In other words, the chapter suggests that Machiavelli may have had a far more sophisticated knowledge of the *Politics* than generally thought and contends that even more careful readings of the relationship between Aristotle and Machiavelli, such as Louis Le Roy's (1510–77) in *Les Politiques d'Aristote* (*The Politics of Aristotle*) of 1568, may have underestimated the extent to which Machiavelli followed Aristotle.

Chapter 4 investigates the effect that the perceived relationship between *The Prince* and the *Politics* had on the reception of Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions in the Renaissance. The chapter focuses on the earliest reception of Machiavellian tenets in the Renaissance, that is Agostino Nifo's (1473–1545) *De regnandi peritia* (*On the Art of Ruling*) of 1523, a creative plagiarism and scholastic remodelling of *The Prince*. As a result of the

similarities between Aristotle's tyrant and Machiavelli's prince, doubts were raised in the sixteenth century about the motives behind Aristotle's discussion of the means of preserving tyranny in the *Politics*. John Case's (1525–1600) *Sphaera civitatis* (*On the Sphere of the City*) of 1588 is revealing. Case wonders whether or not he should expand on Aristotle's analysis in the fifth book of his commentary. Nifo circumvented the issue by relying largely on the *Rhetoric* rather than the *Politics* in his *De regnandi peritia*. The chapter, however, highlights Nifo's consistent misuse of Aristotle in his plagiarism and argues that his tendency to misquote the *Rhetoric* shows a willingness not just to sidestep the issue of tyranny in Book 5 of the *Politics* but to rescue Aristotle from Machiavelli by, in simple words, remoralising him.

Chapter 5 explores the centrality of Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions to Renaissance republican discourse. It does so by looking at Antonio Brucioli's (1498–1566) *Dialogi della morale philosophia* (*Dialogues on Moral Philosophy*) published in three editions between 1526 and 1545. The chapter suggests that Aristotelian ideas may have filtered into the Rucellai Gardens, the meeting place of republican writers such as Machiavelli and Brucioli, by way of Giovanni Pontano's (1426–1503) *De prudentia* (*On Prudence*) of 1508. It then examines Brucioli's use of Aristotle in his *Dialogo della repubblica* (*Dialogue on the Republic*), which is seen as an expression of the political conversations held in the Rucellai Gardens. It highlights the Aristotelian complexion of Brucioli's dialogue but also the tension between Aristotle's anti-expansionism and Brucioli's republican (or neo-Roman) ideology. It draws attention to one of the central problems of republican political thought, namely the fragility of liberty, and reveals how Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions was seen as a vital tool to preserve republican liberty.

Chapter 6 surveys some of the Renaissance vernacular commentaries on Aristotle's *Politics* and explores their shared claims about the relevance of Aristotle's political thought to contemporary politics. Simply put, it argues that Renaissance vernacular translations of and commentaries on Aristotle's *Politics*, such as Bernardo Segni's (1504–58) *Trattato dei governi di Aristotile* (*Treatise on the Governments of Aristotle*) of 1549 and Vito di Gozzi's (1549–1610) *Dello stato delle repubbliche, secondo la mente d'Aristotele* (*On the State of Republics, According to Aristotle*) of 1591,

were less cultural acts than political ones. That is, they saw the *Politics* as a propaganda tool in support of either principalities or republics and as a lens through which to examine recent events and contemporary politics. The chapter highlights Fabio Albergati's (1538–1606) attempt to relate Aristotle's political thought to contemporary political discourse and juxtapose it to reason of state in his *Discorsi politici* (*Political Discourses*) of 1602 and *La repubblica regia* (*The Regal Republic*) of 1627. But it also underscores the relationship between Book 5 of Aristotle's *Politics*, Machiavelli, and reason of state outlined by Ludovico Settala (1550–1633) in his *Della ragion di Stato* (*On Reason of State*) of 1627.

The thesis is part of a broader attempt to revise modern Anglophone historiography on Renaissance and early-modern political thought, which places overwhelming emphasis on the republican tradition (see *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, *Milton and Republicanism*, *Shakespeare and Republicanism*) and neglects the diversity and eclecticism of sixteenth-century political discourse. It is also an attempt to tie reason of state literature to the reception of Aristotle's political ideas in the late Renaissance and invites scholars to re-examine the traditional view that reason of state signalled the end of Aristotelian political theory. Crucially, it explores sources that are often the remit of literary scholars rather than historians of political thought. It encourages the latter to break free from the insularity of their discipline and encourages them to broaden their canon, becoming more receptive to recent findings in intellectual history generally.

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On a more general note, I would like to thank my parents Marco Villani and Christine Stone for their unfailing support, my aunt Karen Stone for supplying opera tickets and reminding me that Machiavelli's writings have a musical dimension too, and my uncle Francesco Noci for helping me with my Italian and always showing a keen interest in my work. Boxun Yin has always made sure that I had a cigar and whiskey in hand when necessary and my sister Costanza Villani and nieces Annalisa and Isabella brought love and joy in some of the most stressful moments of writing up. My fiancée Janette Chow has shared with me all the ups and downs of writing this thesis whereas my mother proofread it all, saving me from many textual infelicities and errors. It was my mother and my fiancée that gave me the strength to see this project through. So I dedicate this thesis to them and to the memory of my grandfather, Rufus John Stone, whom I wish were here to see me handing it in.

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Conventions

Bibliographies. These are simply a list of the primary and secondary sources I have actually quoted or relied on. They are not guides to the increasing literature on the various themes and authors I discuss. The bibliographies of secondary sources give all references to journal numbers in arabic form. Modern editions of primary sources quoted or referenced only for the views of their editor(s) are placed among secondary sources under their name(s). I include under the abbreviation ‘ed.’ or ‘eds.’ both editors and translators, e.g. Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. E. Barker and R.F. Stalley (Oxford, 1995).

Dates. I have tried to give the dates of birth and death of all the pre-eighteenth-century writers that I mention. Usually, however, these dates are approximate. I have therefore chosen not to use ‘circa’ and have implied it instead. For primary sources, I usually give the date of first publication though there are exceptions. I give the year(s) of composition for works such as Machiavelli’s *The Prince*.

Names and titles. I refer to ancient Greek and Roman writers in their most familiar single-name form, both in the text and in the bibliographies. The same applies for some medieval and Renaissance writers, such as Aquinas, Dante, and Petrarch. All titles are given in their original language with an English translation in brackets next to it the first time I mention them in chapter. The only exception is Greek titles and well-known works such as Dante’s *The Divine Comedy* which are given directly in English. I have followed the conventional practice of anglicising the names of rulers with some exception, such as François I. I have left the names of authors in their original form with some exceptions, such as Petrarch.

References. Although I follow the university guidelines, I have made two changes. First, I put the date I accessed a website link in brackets after the http address (that is because I think the

university's format is counter-intuitive). Second, I give the full bibliographical details of a work the first time I mention it in each chapter (so as to spare the reader from having to chase the details in the previous chapters or bibliography). I use modern editions of primary sources whenever possible and I distinguish early-modern writers from modern authors in the footnotes by giving their full names instead of just their initial and last name, e.g. Leonardo Bruni but J. Hankins. I use the Bekker numbering system to refer to Aristotle and the Stephanus to refer to Plato.

Transcriptions. My rule has been to preserve original spelling, capitalisation, italicisation and punctuation so far as possible. However, I normalise the long 's', remove diphthongs, expand contractions, correct obvious typographical errors and change 'u' to 'v' and 'i' to 'j' in accordance with modern orthography. When quoting in Latin I use 'v' as well as 'u', change 'j' to 'i', expand contractions and omit diacritical marks. Sometimes I change a lower-case initial letter to an upper, or vice versa, when fitting quotations around my prose.

Translations. When quoting from classical sources and from early-modern sources in languages other than English all translations are my own except where specifically noted. I make extensive use of the editions published in the Loeb Classical Library, all of which contain facing-page versions in English, but because these renderings are often very free I have preferred to use Oxford University Press and Penguin translations for Greek texts when available. Moreover, since I assume that not all readers of this thesis might be well-versed in French, Italian, and Latin, I use English translations whenever possible.

Incertum est extetne liber Aristotelis ex dubitatione ipsa Aristoteleorum circa eos
qui habentur.

Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655), *Exercitationes paradoxicae* (Grenoble, 1624), exerc. 4.

Introduction

Seventy-six years separate the circulation of Machiavelli's (1469–1527) *The Prince*, written in 1513, and the publication of Giovanni Botero's (1544–1617) *Della ragion di stato* (*On the Reason of State*) in 1589. These were the years when republics began to confront their own fragility, when the modern concept of the state was born, when the language of politics was at a key point in one of its most radical transformations. It is the political ideas of this period that form the bulk of this thesis, and in particular the role that Aristotle played in shaping them.

My principal claim is that Aristotle's political thought and especially his discussion of the dissolution of constitutions, that is his analysis of how states break down or survive in Book 5 of the *Politics*, was central to late Renaissance political discourse. That is not to say, though, that other aspects of the *Politics* were irrelevant in that period or that Aristotle's political thought was unimportant in previous or later centuries. On the contrary, I believe that the recovery of Aristotle's *Politics* in the thirteenth century helped shape medieval political philosophy and that his ideas continued to permeate political literature well into the seventeenth century. The points I try to make are the following: (1) attitudes towards Aristotle's political thought changed in the first half of the fifteenth century; (2) Machiavelli's *The Prince* was justifiably seen by contemporaries to be influenced by Aristotle's analysis of the means of preserving tyranny; (3) this perceived relationship between Aristotle and Machiavelli later informed sixteenth-century perceptions of Aristotle's political thought; (4) while the Renaissance republican tradition derived its ideas mostly from Roman historians and moralists, Renaissance writers believed that Aristotle's political thought offered a key to solving one of the central problems of neo-Roman political theory, namely the fragility of republican liberty; and (5) Aristotelian political ideas continued to be used well into the second half of the sixteenth century as a lens through which to examine contemporary reality and politics, both domestic and foreign policy.

This thesis is unusual in that it opens with a historiographical review, which would generally be much shorter and placed in this introduction rather than in chapter 1. The reason for this is that I have long been bothered by the fact that the history of political thought, as a discipline, is a very insular sub-field of history that often shares more with disciplines in the social sciences or philosophy than with cultural, economic, social, or at times even intellectual history. This means that without the relevant historiographical context students and scholars of early-modern history or medieval and modern languages might struggle to understand the reason why I wrote this thesis. Furthermore, the largely self-referential character of most studies in the history of political thought means that assumptions that have been dismissed by intellectual historians, such as the existence of a rigid dichotomy between Renaissance humanism and scholasticism, are unwittingly and uncritically inherited by historians of political thought. Thus, I feel the need to explain what is wrong with modern histories of Renaissance political thought. In other words, I feel compelled to discuss their neglect of the reception of Aristotle in the sixteenth-century and why Aristotle should be central to their narrative. Unlike most studies in the history of political thought, I do not digress into methodology. That is largely because I believe that starting out with a predetermined way of looking at texts can often blind one to hitherto unnoticed aspects. I believe a method emerges from reading a text or looking at an individual, group, event, or object and wanting to highlight a particular aspect of it, and not the other way round. So, whereas a purely textual analysis of a work might at times shed better light on the ideas therein, at other times it may make sense to look at its context. As a rule, however, I try to marry both a careful reading of the text with a sensitivity to its historical and linguistic contexts, though I have no illusion about the difficulty of bringing the two together and locating the relevant contexts.¹

¹ Read everything; invent nothing. These are more or less Geoffrey Elton's words as related to me by Nicholas Davidson. They summarise what I have tried to do. I would like to thank Emma Claussen for organising a workshop on methodology at the Maison Française of Oxford and inviting me to share my views before an incredibly lively and clever audience.

Another thing I should draw attention to is that, while the title of this thesis might suggest that it explores the reception of Aristotle only in the period between Machiavelli and Botero, the story in fact begins much earlier in chapter 2 with Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) and the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the Renaissance. The reason for this is that Bruni’s biography of Aristotle, that is his *Vita Aristotelis* (*Life of Aristotle*) of 1429, and the letters of 1437–8 to Duke Humphrey (1390–1447) and Flavio Biondo (1392–1463), that preface his Latin translation of the *Politics* reveal a new way of looking at Aristotle’s political thought uncommon to previous generations of scholars and philosophers, viewing it no longer as abstract political philosophy but as empirically grounded political theory. This shaped later perception of Aristotle in the Renaissance.² Naturally, that does not mean that Bruni is single-handedly responsible for the changing interpretation of Aristotle in later Renaissance political thought. But it does mean that he is a central figure in this story and excluding him from the narrative would have dulled the argument of the thesis. With hindsight, then, *The Dissolution of Constitutions: Aristotle in Italian Political Thought from Leonardo Bruni to Giovanni Botero* might have been a better title. However, I defend my original choice by arguing that, although the story begins with Bruni, the bulk of the argument takes off with Machiavelli. In fact, while the central protagonist of this thesis is Aristotle, Machiavelli always lurks in the background and forms an integral part of it. In other words, this is not just a study of the reception of Aristotle in the Renaissance but of the synergy between Aristotle and Machiavelli in sixteenth-century Italy.

The relationship between Aristotle and Machiavelli examined in chapter 3 underpins much of the thesis and justifies to some extent the considerable time leap from talking about Bruni in chapter 2 to discussing Machiavelli and the sixteenth century. To say that the volume of scholarship on Machiavelli is extensive would be a gross understatement. I have tried to mention all the relevant literature in the footnotes and I have included recent historiographical reviews that cover broader studies and biographies. However, I have chosen

² I must record here a debt to James Hankins, whose scholarship on Bruni greatly informs chapter 2 of my thesis. His interpretation of Renaissance political theory also provides one of the main justifications for this research.

to examine the parallel between Aristotle and Machiavelli independently of modern critics since no recent study explores it adequately. The similarities between the two that emerge are striking and suggest that Machiavelli had a far more sophisticated knowledge of the *Politics* than hitherto thought, especially with regard to Aristotle's discussion of tyranny. But I avoid talking of 'influence' except to describe Renaissance perceptions of the relationship between the two because, as both literary scholars and historians of ideas know well, the concept of 'influence' is problematic and I do not have sufficient words to enter into the debate.

The structure of the second half of the thesis is loosely based on the section 'Machiavelli Aristotelico' of Giuliano Procacci's *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* of 1965, but it greatly expands on and revises his arguments and those of other scholars, such as Sydney Anglo. If chapter 3 explores the reasons for the perceived influence of Aristotle on Machiavelli in the late Renaissance, chapter 4 examines the effects this had on the reception of Aristotle in the sixteenth century. It does so by way of Agostino Nifo's (1473–1545) *De regnandi peritia* (*On the Art of Governing*) of 1523, a creative plagiarism and scholastic remodelling of *The Prince*. I should point out, though, that my attention moves slightly away from the *Politics* and towards the *Rhetoric* where there are nevertheless close ties between Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions and deliberative oratory. My argument is twofold. On the one hand, Nifo employs Aristotle throughout his plagiarism to remoralise Machiavelli. On the other hand, he can also be shown to rescue Aristotle from Machiavelli. Nifo's plagiarism shows a marked preference for the *Rhetoric* over the *Politics*, he often misquotes the *Rhetoric*, and generally links Machiavelli's more contentious axioms with Cicero. This behaviour is puzzling considering Nifo's knowledge of Aristotle's *Politics*. It can be explained, however, by a desire to create some distance between what was perceived to be the similarities between Aristotle's tyrant and Machiavelli's prince.

One of the central aims of this thesis and especially chapter 5 is to dispel the modern myth that the political theory of the Renaissance was more Roman than Greek. There is no doubt that the idea of republican liberty as freedom from arbitrary rule gained currency in the Renaissance and sprang from the tenets of Roman moralists and historians like Cicero,

Seneca, Sallust, and Tacitus. My contention is that republicanism was not the dominant ideology of the period and that republican discussions still made use of Aristotelian ideas when it came to talking about the means of preserving republics, as evident in Antonio Brucioli's (1498–1566) *Dialogo della morale filosofia* (*Dialogue on Moral Philosophy*) of 1526–45. I would be lying here, though, if I did not say that this position is as much informed by historical research as it is the expression of a personal political belief, namely that political actors do not think purely in terms of ideologies but in terms of policies aimed at preserving the state and its citizens' well-being. In other words, politics and ideology are two related yet different things and whereas a coherent system of beliefs about justice, freedom, and equality may inform politics, some policies necessarily work outside or against ideology.

There is, however, an altogether broader objective that comes to the fore in chapter 6, which is to re-assess the role of Renaissance vernacularisations of Aristotle's *Politics*. It is commonplace to see these renderings as part of a broader literary movement that engulfed sixteenth-century Italy. But there is a clear sense in which Aristotle's political thought was being translated not just for cultural reasons but for political purposes. Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions offered a unique window through which to examine contemporary reality. We see this in the efforts made at introducing modern examples alongside Aristotelian political tenets, in the attempts to align or juxtapose Aristotle to contemporary political theory, and in the bid to draw parallels or distinctions between Aristotle and reason of state.³ These endeavours are significant and scholars ought to be aware of them; instead they tend to ignore them partly because, as I said before, most literary scholars and historians of political thought work in parallel universes, but also because, despite attempts to discuss even the more ephemeral political writings of the early-modern period, modern histories of political thought still focus predominantly on the canonical texts of the Renaissance, such as Machiavelli's *The Prince* or *Discourses on Livy* written between 1514 and 1519. This, then, is my attempt to straddle the worlds of both literature and the history of

³ The examples introduced alongside Aristotelian tenets often related to Venice. The original design of the thesis included a chapter on Aristotle and the myth of Venice. Unfortunately, due to the word-limit and time constraints I was unable to include it.

political thought and to show how texts that are generally the remit of literary scholars can also inform modern interpretations of Renaissance political theory.

Part I

Renaissance Aristotelianism and the History of Political Thought

A Historiographical Review

I. RENAISSANCE ARISTOTELIANISM IN MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Historians of Western thought have often expressed the view that the Renaissance was basically an age of Plato, whereas the Middle Ages had been an age of Aristotle. This view can no longer be maintained without considerable qualifications. In spite of a widespread revolt against the authority of Aristotle, the tradition of Aristotelianism continued to be very strong throughout the Renaissance.¹

Paul Kristeller (1905 – 99), *The Classics and Renaissance Thought* (1955).

Since its first General Assembly in Brussels on May 26, 1920, the Union Académique Internationale has undertaken several ambitious projects, none more catalytic than Konstanty Michalski's *Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi* first proposed in 1929 to the Polish Academy of Sciences. Under the directorship of August Mansion, the *Aristoteles Latinus* project gave impetus to it. This was followed by Raymond Klibansky's and William Ross's *Plato Latinus* of 1937.² Unsurprisingly, the *Aristoteles Latinus* acquired mammoth proportions, evolving into a twenty-four-volume long series that became a catalyst in its own right – the *Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus*, for instance, turned into a separate series in 1971.³ Of the two thousand manuscripts

¹ P.O. Kristeller, *The Classics and Renaissance Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 23.

² R. Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition during the Middle Ages: Outlines of a Corpus Platonium Medii Aevi* (London, 1939).

³ Details of individual volumes in the *Aristoteles Latinus* series can be found in G. Lacombe (ed.), *Aristoteles latinus: codices pars prior* (Rome, 1939); A. Birkenmajer (ed.), *Aristoteles latinus: codices pars posterior* (Cambridge, 1955); L. Minio-Paluello (ed.), *Aristoteles latinus: codices. Supplementa altera* (Bruges, 1961). The *Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus* series is published by Brill. Details of individual volumes in this series can be found at <http://www.brill.com/publications/aristoteles-semitico-latinus> (accessed 2 October 2015). For

and editions that made up this body of literature, many were found to be from the seventeenth century, a realisation that led scholars to wonder about the impact of Aristotle beyond the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance. Tentative answers to the question of the reception of Aristotle in the Renaissance were given by scholars such as Edward Grant, William Edwards, and Edward Mahoney at the Twelfth International Congress of Philosophy of 1958 in Venice and Padua and at the American Historical Association's Symposium of 1966 in New York.⁴ Soon the revolutionary idea that Aristotle had dominated the Renaissance too took hold. It did so chiefly in the wake of essential catalogues like Kristeller's *Iter Italicum* of 1963–92 and Charles H. Lohr's *Renaissance Latin Aristotle Commentaries* of 1974–82. This development was cemented in 1983 with the publication of Charles B. Schmitt's seminal *Aristotle and the Renaissance*.⁵ Since then studies on the subject, often lost in broad yet still useful bibliographies, such as the *Bibliographie internationale de l'humanisme et de la renaissance*, *International Philosophical Bibliography* and *Iter Bibliography*, have multiplied and the crude picture of the Renaissance as the age of Plato has long been subverted.⁶ Aristotelianism today takes centre stage in the histories of Renaissance philosophy.⁷

a good introduction to the series and recent scholarship on Aristotle in the Semitic tradition, see A. van Oppenraay (ed.), *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle* (Leiden, 2012).

⁴ *Atti del xii congresso internazionale di filosofia* (12 vols., Florence, 1958–60), ix; *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1966* (Washington, D.C., 1967), i, p. 50; A. Del Torre, 'Recenti contributi alla storia dell'Aristotelismo del Rinascimento', *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia*, 24 (1969), pp. 453–8; C.H. Lohr, 'Aristotle in the West: Some Recent Books', *Traditio* 25 (1969), pp. 417–31; A. Poppi, 'Un decennio di studi sull'aristotelismo italiano del Rinascimento', *Bollettino filosofico*, 3 (1969), pp. 86–95; C.B. Schmitt, *A Critical Survey and Bibliography of Studies on Renaissance Aristotelianism, 1958–1969* (Padua, 1971). The starting point for most of these historiographical reviews was P.O. Kristeller and J.H. Randall, 'The Study of the Philosophies of the Renaissance', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 2 (1941), pp. 449–96.

⁵ A. Birkenmajer, *Classement des ouvrages attribués à Aristote par le Moyen Âge* (Krakow, 1932); P.O. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum: A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries*, (10 vols., London, 1963–96); C.H. Lohr, 'Medieval Aristotle Commentaries', *Traditio*, 23–24 and 26–30 (1967–8 and 1970–4) and *Latin Aristotle Commentaries: II, Renaissance Authors*, (Florence, 1988), originally published as eight articles in *Studies in the Renaissance* and *Renaissance Quarterly* between 1972 and 1982; E.F. Cranz and C.B. Schmitt, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions, 1501–1600* (Baden-Baden, 1984); C.B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983).

⁶ See the *Bibliographie internationale de l'humanisme et de la renaissance* (Geneva, 1965–); *International Philosophical Bibliography* (Louvain, 1985–). *Iter Bibliography* can be found at <http://www.itergateway.org> (accessed 2 October 2015). Aristotelianism today takes centre stage in the histories of Renaissance philosophy,

⁷ See C.B. Schmitt and Q.R.D. Skinner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988); B.P. Copenhaver and C.B. Schmitt, *Renaissance Philosophy* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 60–126; R.H. Popkin (ed.), *The Columbia History of Western Philosophy* (New York, N.Y., 1999), pp. 280–91; J.A. Kraye

Yet, despite having moved centre stage, many aspects of Aristotle's afterlife in the Renaissance continue to be obscure, not least the reception of his political thought. Schmitt noted in his *Critical Survey and Bibliography of Studies on Renaissance Aristotelianism* of 1971 that 'Aristotelian writings on moral and political philosophy were still much read during the Renaissance and into the seventeenth century, though this is hardly reflected in modern scholarly studies'.⁸ So, following from where Concetto Marchesi, Eugenio Garin, and René Gauthier had left off, intellectual historians like Antonino Poppi, Jill Kraye, David Lines, and Schmitt have explored most facets of Renaissance Aristotelian ethics.⁹ Historians of political thought, however, do not seem to have extended the same courtesy to Aristotle beyond the history of medieval political thought, natural rights theories, and Protestant Aristotelianism. Scholars such as Edward Cranz, Martin Grabmann, Conor Martin, Christoph Flüeler, James Blythe, David Luscombe, Gianfranco Fioravanti, Roberto Lambertini, Marco Toste, and Lidia Lanza have cast light on the medieval reception of Aristotle's *Politics*.¹⁰ Otto Krause,

and M.W.F. Stone (eds.), *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy* (London, 2000), pp. 24–90 and 193–208; C. Vasoli, *Le filosofie del rinascimento* (Milan, 2002), pp. 113–32; G. Parkinson (ed.), *The Routledge History of Philosophy* (10 vols., London, 2003), iv, pp. 37–42; J. Hankins (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 49–71.

⁸ C.B. Schmitt, *A Critical Survey*, p. 85.

⁹ C. Marchesi, *L'Etica Nicomachea nella tradizione latina medievale* (Messina, 1904); E. Garin, 'La fortuna dell'Etica aristotelica nel '400', *Rinascimento*, 2 (1951), pp. 321–34; R.A. Gauthier, *L'Ethique à Nicomaque: Introduction, traduction et commentaire* (2 vols., Louvain, 1970), ii; A. Poppi, 'Il problema della filosofia morale nella scuola padovana del rinascimento: Platonismo e aristotelismo nella definizione del metodo dell'etica' in *Platon et Aristote à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1976), pp. 105–46; A. Poppi, *L'Etica del Rinascimento tra Platone e Aristotele* (Naples, 1997); C.B. Schmitt, 'Aristotle's Ethics in the Sixteenth Century: Some Preliminary Considerations' in W. Rüegg and D. Wuttke (eds.), *Ethik im Humanismus* (Boppard, 1979), pp. 87–112; J.A. Kraye, 'Renaissance Commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*' in O. Weijers (ed.), *The Vocabulary of Teaching and Research between Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, 1995), pp. 96–117 reprinted in Kraye, *Classical Traditions in Renaissance Philosophy* (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 155–80; J.A. Kraye, 'Italy, France, and the Classical Tradition: The Origins of the Philological Commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*' in C. Caruso and A. Laird (eds.), *Italy and the Classical Tradition: Language, Thought and Poetry in 1300–1600* (London, 2009), pp. 118–40; D. Lines, 'The Importance of Being Good: Moral Philosophy in the Italian Universities, 1300–1600', *Rinascimento*, 36 (1996), pp. 139–93; D. Lines, 'The Commentary Literature on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in Early Renaissance Italy: Preliminary Considerations', *Traditio*, 55 (1999), pp. 245–82; D. Lines, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300–1650): The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education* (Leiden, 2002).

¹⁰ E. Cranz, 'Aristotelianism in Medieval Political Theory: A Study of the Reception of the Politics' (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1938); M. Grabmann, *Die mittelalterlichen Kommentare zur Politik des Aristoteles* (Munich, 1941); C. Martin, 'The Commentaries on the Politics of Aristotle in the Late Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Centuries, with Reference to the Thought and Political Life of the Time' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1949); idem, 'Some Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's *Politics*', *History*, 36 (1951), pp. 33–6; L.J. Daly, 'Medieval and Renaissance Commentaries on the *Politics* of Aristotle', *Duquesne Review*, 13 (1968), pp. 41–55; J. Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*' in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, and J. Pinborg, eds., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 723–37; C.J. Nederman, 'Aristotelianism and the origins of

Richard Tuck, Karl Itling, Michael Stolleis, Michel Bastit, Knud Haakonssen, Annabel Brett, Brian Tierney, Pauline Westerman, and Tim Hochstrasser among others have illuminated Aristotle's place in the history of natural law and natural rights theories.¹¹ Protestant Aristotelianism has been covered chiefly by Peter Petersen, Horst Dreitzel, Bo Lindberg, and Martin van Gelderen.¹² Yet studies of Renaissance Latin and early-modern French commentaries on the *Politics* have only just began to appear, albeit only in the context of broader studies of Thomas Hobbes and Jean Bodin.¹³ Ingrid de Smet's recent article on the

"political science" in the twelfth century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52 (1991), pp. 179–94; idem, "The Meaning of "Aristotelianism" in Medieval Moral and Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57 (1996), pp. 563–85; C.F. Flüeler, *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen Politica im späten Mittelalter* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1992); J.M. Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J., 1992); D. Luscombe, 'The *Ethics* and the *Politics* in Britain in the Middle Ages' in J. Marenbon, ed., *Aristotle in Britain during the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 339–49; G. Fioravanti, 'La *Politica* aristotelica nel medioevo: linee di una ricezione', *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 1 (1997), pp. 17–29; R. Lambertini, 'La diffusione della "Politica" e la definizione di un linguaggio politico aristotelico', *Quaderni storici*, 102 (1999), pp. 677–704; idem, 'Lo studio e la recezione della *Politica* tra xiii e xiv secolo' in C. Dolcini, ed., *Il pensiero politico dell'età antica e medioevale: dalla polis alla formazione degli Stati europei* (Turin, 2000), pp. 145–73; M. Toste, 'Virtue and the City: The Virtues of the Ruler and the Citizen in the Medieval Reception of Aristotle's *Politics*' in I.P. Bejczy and Nederman, eds., *Princely Virtues in the Middle Ages, 1200 – 1500* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 73–98; L. Lanza, *Ei autem qui de politica considerat... Aristotele nel pensiero politico medievale* (Turnhout, 2015). It should be noted here that I take the Middle Ages to end in the early fourteenth century with Ptolemy of Lucca and Marsilius of Padua.

¹¹ O.W. Krause, *Naturrechtler des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts. Ihre Bedeutung für die Entwicklung eines natürlichen Privatrechts* (Frankfurt, 1982); R. Tuck, *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge, 1979); K.H. Ilting, *Naturrecht und Sittlichkeit. Begriffsgeschichtliche Studien* (Stuttgart, 1983); M. Stolleis, ed., *Staatsdenker im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Reichspublizistik – Politik – Naturrecht* (Frankfurt, 1987); M. Bastit, *Naissance de la loi moderne. La pensée de la loi de saint Thomas à Suárez* (Paris, 1990); K. Haakonssen, *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy from Gortius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1996); A.S. Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature: Individual Rights in Late Scholastic Thought* (Cambridge, 1997); B. Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies in Natural Rights, Natural Law and Church Law 1150–1625* (Atlanta, GA, 1997); P.C. Westerman, *The Disintegration of Natural Law Theory, Aquinas to Finnis* (Leiden, 1998); T.J. Hochstrasser, *Natural Law Theories in the Early Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2000); idem and P. Schröder, eds., *Early Modern Natural Law Theories: Contexts and Strategies in the Early Enlightenment* (Dordrecht, 2003); M. Stolleis and L. Daston, eds., *Natural Law and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy* (Farnham, 2008).

¹² P. Petersen, *Geschichte der aristotelischen Philosophie im protestantischen Deutschland* (Leipzig, 1921); H. Dreitzel, *Protestantische Aristotelismus und absoluter Staat: die "Politica" der Henning Arnisaues (ca. 1575–1636)* (Wiesbaden, 1970); idem, 'Hermann Conring und die politische Wissenschaft seiner Zeit' in Stolleis, ed., *Hermann Conring (1606–1681): Beiträge zu Leben und Werk* (Berlin, 1983), pp. 135–72; idem, 'Reason of State and the Crisis of Political Aristotelianism: An Essay on the Development of 17th Century Political Philosophy', *History of European Ideas*, 28 (2002), pp. 163–87; R. Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651* (Cambridge, 1993); B. Lindberg, 'Political Aristotelianism in the Seventeenth Century' in M. Pade, ed., *Renaissance Readings of the Corpus Aristotelicum* (Copenhagen, 2001), pp. 241–54; M. van Gelderen, 'Aristotelians, Monarchomachs and Republicans: Sovereignty and *respublica mixta* in Dutch and German Political Thought, 1580–1650' in idem and Q.R.D. Skinner, eds., *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage* (2 vols, Cambridge, 2002), i, pp. 195–218; R. von Friedeburg and M.J. Seidler, 'The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation' in H.A. Lloyd, G. Burgess, and S. Hodson, eds., *European Political Thought, 1450–1700: Religion, Law and Philosophy* (New Haven, Conn., 2007), pp. 102–75.

¹³ A.S. Brett, "The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth": Thomas Hobbes and Late Renaissance Commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*', *Hobbes Studies*, 23 (2010), pp. 72–102; H. Weber, 'Utilisation et critique de *La Politique* d'Aristote dans *La République* de Jean Bodin' in R.R. Bolgar, ed.,

reception of Aristotle's *Politics* during the French Wars of Religion is the exception to the rule.¹⁴

The neglect is puzzling, considering both the unique place that the Renaissance and Aristotle hold in the history of political thought and the constellation of new distinctly historical, that is contextualist, studies that should have liberated even the more ephemeral contributions to Renaissance political thought from the tyranny of traditional canons.¹⁵ Sadly, because of modern prejudices and concerns, scholars have ignored a large and well-known body of Renaissance Aristotelian literature that on close inspection can be found to have played a significant role in the history of Renaissance political thought.

Aristotelianism, moreover, remains an elusive concept. Schmitt held the idea of a plurality of Aristotelianisms, arguing that 'the single rubric Aristotelianism is not adequate to describe the range of diverse assumptions, attitudes, approaches to knowledge, reliance on authority, utilisation of sources, and methods of analysis to be found amongst the Renaissance followers of Aristotle.'¹⁶ This raised questions on how to unite widely diverse authors under the same banner. Schmitt believed in what he called a 'family resemblance – a fruitful Wittgensteinian term' born out of the 'stubborn fact ... that [these authors] called themselves Aristotelians and defined their own endeavour as Aristotelian philosophy'.¹⁷ Grant thought of it along similar lines, referring to it in terms of species and population: 'no single member of [a species] is typical of the whole population'.¹⁸ Hans Thijssen identified it with a *Weltanschauung*, that is a 'framework of shared beliefs'. For him, 'the arguments, debates, and conflicts, the whole proliferation of theories, occur within a very general and large body of assumptions that

Classical Influences on European Culture, A.D. 1500–1700 (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 305–13; A.B. Neschke-Hentschke, 'Frankreich im Zeitalter der Religionskriege: Jean Bodin' in idem and C. Horn, eds., *Politischer Aristotelismus : die Rezeption der aristotelischen Politik von der Antike bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 2008), pp. 192–217.

¹⁴ I.A.R. de Smet, 'Philosophy for Princes: Aristotle's *Politics* and Its Readers During the French Wars of Religion', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 76 (2013), pp. 23–47.

¹⁵ M. Bevir, 'The Contextual Approach' in G. Klosko (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 11–23.

¹⁶ C.B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, p. 10; C.B. Schmitt, *A Critical Survey and Bibliography*, pp. 16–7.

¹⁷ C.B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, pp. 111–12. Wittgenstein writes of *Familienähnlichkeit* primarily in his *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees (Oxford, 1953), §66.

¹⁸ E.H. Grant, 'Ways to Interpret the Terms "Aristotelian" and "Aristotelianism" in Medieval and Renaissance Natural Philosophy', *History of Science*, 25 (1987), pp. 335–58, p. 347.

are of many varieties'.¹⁹ Cary J. Nederman saw the Aristotelianism of medieval moral and political thought as 'held together by a particular organization of and orientation towards the kind of knowledge necessary for achieving human good in its moral and political dimension'. For Nederman, Aristotelianism posited 'the *practical* quality of the study of ethics and politics and hence the value of such knowledge insofar as it guides action'.²⁰ Schmitt's idea of the plurality of Aristotelianisms, with its tendency to disaggregate authors and to talk of discrete Aristotelianisms, has become the norm. However, the problem of how to talk of discrete Aristotelianisms within a single unified tradition remains an under-explored fixture in the literature.²¹

My intention in this chapter is to examine the intersecting historiography on Renaissance Aristotelianism and early-modern political thought with special reference to Quentin Skinner's underlying interpretations of Renaissance humanism and Renaissance political thought. My aim is to explain why the reception of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance has suffered substantial neglect in modern historiography. I examine two interconnected trends in the history of political thought, that is the interest in the transition from medieval to modern political thought and the overwhelming attention to what the twentieth-century historian Hans Baron notably referred to as *Bürgerhumanismus* (civic humanism).²² Both trends are part of a broader attempt to trace the origins of the modern state and republican ideology nowadays generally associated with Skinner and proponents of the 'Cambridge School'. Such emphasis on the genealogy of the modern state and republican liberty must be credited with driving the steady surge of interest in Renaissance political

¹⁹ H.J. Thijssen, 'Some Reflections on Continuity and Transformation in Medieval (and Renaissance) Natural Philosophy', *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 2 (1991), pp. 503–28, p. 510.

²⁰ C.J. Nederman, 'The Meaning of 'Aristotelianism' in Medieval Moral and Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57 (1996), pp. 563–85, p. 565.

²¹ M.J. Edwards, 'Aristotelianism, Descartes and Hobbes', *The Historical Journal*, 50 (2007), pp. 449–64, p. 452. On Schmitt's contribution to Renaissance studies and our understanding of Renaissance Aristotelianism, see C. Blackwell, 'Towards a History of Renaissance Philosophy: A Bibliography of the Writings of C. B. Schmitt' in J. Henry and S. Hutton (eds.), *New Perspectives on Renaissance Thought: Essays in the History of Science, Education and Philosophy in Memory of Charles B. Schmitt* (London, 1990), pp. 291–308; B.P. Copenhaver, 'Science and philosophy in Early Modern Europe: The Historiographical Significance of the Work of Charles B. Schmitt', *Annals of Science*, 44 (1987), pp. 507–17.

²² H. Baron, 'Review: *Soziale Probleme der Renaissance* by F. E. Janosi', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 132 (1925), pp. 136–41. For a discussion of the birth of the term 'civic humanism' in Baron's thought, see R. Fubini, 'Renaissance Historian: The Career of Hans Baron', *Journal of Modern History*, 64 (1992), pp. 541–74.

thought. But it is also to be blamed for a distorted picture of the political theory of the Renaissance. This distortion has left scholars blinded to the full significance of Aristotle in Renaissance political discourse. Republicanism in the Renaissance was neither dominant nor exclusivist. In other words, neither was it the main ideology of the period nor did it exclude other seemingly conflicting beliefs.

The idea recently put forward by James Hankins and Eric Nelson that the political theory of the Renaissance was far more diverse and pluralist than has hitherto been described warrants an obvious reconsideration of the centrality of Aristotelian political thought in the Renaissance. After all, historians of ideas have generally accepted, in the words of Glenn Burgess, that ‘Aristotelianism... remained a persistent and flexible tool, exploitable in relation to the concept of virtue and to the political model of *politeia* just as much as to the preservation of monarchical and princely rule’.²³ This versatility, along with the subject-matter of Aristotle’s *Politics*, invites us to explore the myriad deployments of Aristotelian arguments in Renaissance political thought. The thought that Aristotle’s relevance in the history of political ideas is to be confined to his political philosophy, in other words his ideas about man, nature, citizenship, and the *polis*, ignores the importance of his political theory in the narrower sense of analysis of political activity and behaviour, and its importance in the Renaissance.

Furthermore, new insights into the relationship between Renaissance humanism and scholasticism and the centrality of Aristotelian philosophy to humanist thought undermine some of the assumptions of recent histories of sixteenth-century political thought. Kristeller remarked long before Schmitt that ‘Aristotelians were in many ways influenced by ideas and methods that originated outside their own tradition’.²⁴ Intellectual historians, however, have recently begun considering the broader implications of this eclecticism vis-à-vis Kristeller’s

²³ G. Burgess *et al.* (eds.), *European Political Thought 1450–1700: Religion, Law and Philosophy* (New Haven, Conn., 2007), p. 56.

²⁴ P.O. Kristeller, ‘Renaissance Aristotelianism’, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 6 (1965), pp. 157–74 reprinted in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (4 vols., Rome, 1956–96), iii, pp. 341–69, p. 341. Cf. E. Renan, *Averroès et l’averroïsme. Essai historique* (Paris, 1866); E. Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit* (3 vols., Berlin, 1922), i, pp. 73–170.

interpretation of Renaissance humanism.²⁵ Kristeller and his followers have always been keen to stress the rhetorical nature of Renaissance humanism, arguing that this movement based on the *studia humanitatis*, that is the cycle of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy, represents ‘a classicizing period in the history of Western *rhetoric*’ and not, as Garin held, a primitive expression of Sartrean existentialism.²⁶ ‘I am inclined to consider the humanists,’ Kristeller notably wrote, ‘not as philosophers with a curious lack of philosophical ideas and a curious fancy for eloquence, but rather as professional rhetoricians with a new, classicist ideal of culture, who tried to assert the importance of their field of learning and to impose their standards upon the other fields of learning and of science, including philosophy.’²⁷ Fresh revelations by Jill Kraye about Renaissance humanists and their relationship with the philosophical canon, and in particular the Aristotelian corpus, undermine this position.²⁸ The newfound involvement of humanists with Aristotelian philosophy not just from a moral or philological standpoint but a philosophical one too casts doubts over the value of Kristeller’s and, by extension, Skinner’s straitened definitions.

The traditional focus on the Latin Aristotelian tradition is similarly beginning to look narrow. The knowledge that Aristotle enjoyed a vernacular dimension in the Middle Ages and Renaissance has exercised scholars since the end of the nineteenth century.²⁹ Unfortunately, historians have held the same prejudices over the value of philosophy in the vernacular as have some Renaissance philosophers. Carlo Dionisotti’s call for a study of early-modern vernacular translations in the late 1960s fell largely on deaf ears.³⁰ In recent times though, following in the footsteps of Wiktor Wasik, the historian of philosophy Luca Bianchi

²⁵ P.O. Kristeller, ‘Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance’, *Byzantion*, 17 (1944–5), pp. 346–74 reprinted in *Studies*, i, pp. 553–83.

²⁶ J. Hankins, ‘Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller: Existentialism, Neo-Kantianism, and the Post-War Interpretation of Renaissance Humanism’ in M. Ciliberto (ed.), *Eugenio Garin: dal rinascimento all’illuminismo* (Rome, 2011), pp. 481–505, p. 488.

²⁷ P.O. Kristeller, ‘Humanism and Scholasticism’ in *Studies*, p. 563. Cf. E. Garin, *L’umanesimo italiano: filosofia e vita civile nel rinascimento* (Bari, 1952).

²⁸ J.A. Kraye, ‘Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon’, paper delivered at *The Place of Renaissance Humanism in the History of Western Philosophy* conference held at the University of Groningen, N.L., 13 June 2013.

²⁹ D. Gravino, *Saggio d’una storia dei volgarizzamenti d’opere greche nel secolo xv* (Naples, 1896).

³⁰ C. Dionisotti, *Gli umanisti e il volgare fra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Florence, 1968). For a later survey of the *volgare* in the Renaissance, see R. Bessi (ed.), *Umanesimo volgare: Studi di letteratura fra Tre e Quattrocento* (Florence, 2004).

has called for an exhaustive survey of what he termed *l'aristotelismo volgare* (vernacular Aristotelianism).³¹ Since then, projects on vernacular Aristotelianism in the Renaissance have sprung up and a large body of hitherto unknown literature has been uncovered – other early-modern linguistic contexts remain faint and distant blips on the academic radar.³²

II. THE RENAISSANCE AND ARISTOTLE IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Let us begin where the last broad survey of scholarship on the history of Renaissance political thought left off, that is with Felix Gilbert's historiographical review 'Political Thought of the Renaissance and Reformation' of 1941 and the remark that 'the concept of the all-embracing sovereign state, accepted with such complacent approval in the nineteenth century, has been subjected to a more discriminating evaluation since we have seen how the centralizing power can in practice appropriate all political functions and absorb the whole of individual life.'³³ Historians have long been concerned with the origins of modernity. Nineteenth-century historians of political thought shared a tendency to see the origins of modern political thought in the idea of *Machstaat*, that is the omnipotent, autonomous, and secular state, which they found in the writings of Machiavelli (1469–1527) and the Protestant reformers. Therefore, up until the twentieth century, the history of political thought was largely the history of Machiavelli and Machiavellianism. Yet, as Gilbert noted, 'research in political thought is peculiarly at the mercy of the ideas and needs of the moment, and the development of modern politics has had a share in modifying the views of recent scholars'. In the wake of the

³¹ W. Wasik, 'L'aristotélisme populaire comme fragment de la Renaissance', *Revue d'histoire de la philosophie et d'histoire générale de la civilisation*, n.s., 9 (1935), pp. 33–66 and L. Bianchi, 'Per una storia dell'aristotelismo 'volgare' nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca', *Bruniana e Campanelliana*, 15 (2009), pp. 367–85.

³² See <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/projects/vernaculararistotelianism/> (accessed on 2 October 2015) for the Warburg-Warwick *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy, c. 1400–c. 1650* Arts and Humanities Research Council project run by Simon Gilson, Jill Kraye, and David Lines; and <http://aristotleinthevernacular.org/> (accessed on 2 October 2015) for the University of Venice Ca' Foscari and Warwick *Aristotle in the Italian Vernacular: Rethinking Renaissance and Early-Modern Intellectual History (c. 1400–c. 1650)* European Research Council project run by Marco Sgarbi.

³³ F. Gilbert, 'Political Thought of the Renaissance and Reformation: A Report on Recent Scholarship', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 4 (1941), pp. 443–68, p. 445.

German Reich, the Great War, and the Second World War attitudes changed and historians began to take a more critical stance towards the idea of the power-state. For example, they began to question the divide between the Middle Ages and Renaissance at the heart of previous histories of Machiavellianism and Renaissance political thought. Gilbert, a German Jewish émigré who fled Italy for the United States when the Nazis seized power in Berlin in 1933, traced this re-evaluation of the *Machstaat* back to Frederic W. Maitland's introduction to the English translation of Otto von Guericke's *Political Theories of the Middle Ages* of 1900 and the idea, in Gilbert's words, of the Middle Ages 'as an epoch in which the possibility of a society formed from equal and co-operative groups had been realized'.³⁴ But criticism of the omnipotent, autonomous, and secular state dates back to before Maitland, that is to Jacob Burckhardt's seminal *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* of 1860, and it was Burckhardt's interpretation of the Renaissance that laid the ground for recent scholarship on Renaissance republicanism.

Burckhardt's *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* was one of the first works of modern historiography to trace the origins of modern political thought to the Renaissance.³⁵ 'In them [the Italian city-states of the Renaissance],' Burckhardt wrote, 'for the first time we detect the modern political spirit of Europe, surrendered freely to its own instincts, often displaying the worst features of an unbridled egotism, outraging every right, and killing every germ of a healthier culture'. In other words, 'a new fact appears in history – the state as the outcome of reflection and calculation, the state as a work of art'.³⁶ Burckhardt's view nestled cosily in with existing literature on Renaissance political discourse that saw Machiavelli as the father of

³⁴ F. Gilbert, 'Political Thought of the Renaissance and Reformation', p. 445.

³⁵ J. Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basel, 1860). All English translations are from J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, ed. S.G.C. Middlemore (London, 1878). Note that, while modern editions of Burckhardt's work spell 'Cultur' as 'Kultur', I have chosen to stay with original.

³⁶ J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, p. 2. As Michael Drolet pointed out to me, there is an important aesthetic dimension to this. Burckhardt's knowledge of German idealism, particularly Schiller and Schelling, is important to this understanding of the state as a 'work of art'. There is embedded in this the idea of nature as an active force whose powers need only to be actualised by man. See T.J. Reed, *Light in Germany: Scenes from an Unknown Enlightenment* (Chicago, Ill., 2015), ch. 3; J.W. Burrow, 'Introduction' in W. von Humboldt, *The Limits to State Action*, ed. J. Burrow (Cambridge, 1969), pp. i–xliii.

modern political thought. ‘Of all who thought it possible to construct a state,’ he remarked, ‘the greatest beyond all comparison was Machiavelli’.

He treats existing forces as living and active, takes a large and an accurate view of alternative possibilities, and seeks to mislead neither himself nor others... The objectivity of his political judgement is sometimes appalling in its sincerity; but it is the sign of a time of no ordinary need and peril, when it was a hard matter to believe in right, or to credit others with just dealing. Virtuous indignation at his expense is thrown away upon us who have seen in what sense political morality is understood by the statesmen of our own century.³⁷

For Burckhardt, Machiavelli had cast new light on reason of state, that is ‘the fundamental principle of national conduct, the state’s first Law of Motion’ to borrow the historian Friedrich Meinecke’s Newtonian metaphor from *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* of 1925.³⁸

Burckhardt’s *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, though, was at first given short shrift by historians of political thought. For example, it is absent from Gilbert’s historiographical review. Burckhardt was admittedly more concerned with capturing the *Zeitgeist* or spiritual essence of an epoch through its literature and art than with vindicating the emergence of an all-powerful German state. In a 1906 review for *Historische Zeitschrift*, Meinecke accused him of failing to follow in the footsteps of his mentor Leopold von Ranke and therefore lapsing into dilettantism.³⁹ But in his unwillingness to defend the *Machtstaat* and authoritarian statesmen of his century, Burckhardt ironically laid the ground for a revolution in the study of the history of political ideas.

The little importance Burckhardt attributed to the power-state was couched in a pessimistic view of modernity that neither his teacher nor Meinecke shared.⁴⁰ Whereas Ranke

³⁷ J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, p. 47.

³⁸ F. Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson* (Munich and Berlin, 1925). All English translation are from F. Meinecke, *Machiavellianism: The Doctrine of Raison d’État and its Place in Modern History*, ed. D. Scott and W. Stark (London, 1957), p. 1.

³⁹ F. Meinecke, ‘Jacob Burckhardt: die deutsche Geschichtsschreibung und der nationale Staat’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 97 (1906), pp. 557–62.

⁴⁰ Nietzsche is one of very few contemporaries who shared Burckhardt’s pessimism, but, despite Nietzsche’s attempts to forge a close relationship with him, Burckhardt kept his distance from the man who was later appointed to the Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Basel. On their relationship, see C. Andler and G. Bianquis, *Nietzsche und Jakob Burckhardt* (Basel, 1926); E. Salin, *Jakob Burckhardt und Nietzsche* (Basel, 1938); A.W.O. von Martin, *Nietzsche und Burckhardt* (Munich, 1942).

and his circle betrayed an excitement and clear advocacy for constitutional monarchy, militarism, and the unification of Germany as expounded in Ranke's *Die Grossen Mächte* of 1833 and *Politisches Gespräch* of 1836, Burckhardt, a Swiss Calvinist born in democratic Basel, presciently saw in the centralisation of the state the major threat to European freedom.⁴¹ Nowhere is this better shown than in the *Über das Studium der Geschichte* course that he gave in his hometown in the Winter of 1868 and 1870 and published in his *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* of 1905.⁴² 'The modern trend of the nations is towards unity and the great State,' he wrote, 'which, even when its territorial unity is threatened (as in the American Union) and it seems to be heading for separation, upholds its unity with all the means in its power'. Naturally then, 'what the nation desires, implicitly or explicitly, is power. Its previous dismemberment is abhorred as a brand of shame'.⁴³ Ranke was writing at a time when Prussia was a relatively unimportant European power when compared with France and Britain whereas Burckhardt was writing at a time when Prussia was threatening to overturn the established European order. Culture was being increasingly sidelined for Burckhardt who sighed at 'the hopelessness of any attempt at decentralization, of any voluntary restriction of power in favour of local and civilized life. The central will can never be too strong'. His discussion of *power* revealed the true extent of his pessimism and fear about the new German Empire.

Now power is of its nature evil, whoever wields it. It is not stability but a lust, and *ipso facto* insatiable, therefore unhappy in itself and doomed to make others unhappy. Inevitably, in its pursuit, peoples fall into the hands both of ambitious dynasties seeking to maintain themselves, and

⁴¹ L. von Ranke, 'Die Grossen Mächte' and 'Politisches Gespräch' in L. von Ranke, *Historisch-Politische Zeitschrift* (Berlin, 1833 and 1836), pp. 1–51 and 775–807 respectively. On Burckhardt's political thought, see R.F. Sigurdson, *Jacob Burckhardt's Social and Political Thought* (Toronto, 2004). The differences between Ranke and Burckhardt go much deeper than ideology and rest on different conceptions of history. For a good discussion of this, see F. Gilbert, *History: Politics or Culture? Reflections on Ranke and Burckhardt* (Princeton, N.J., 1990).

⁴² J. Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (Berlin, 1905). All English translations are from J. Burckhardt, *Reflections on History*, ed. M.D. Hottinger (London, 1943).

⁴³ J. Burckhardt, *Reflections on History*, p. 85.

of individual ‘great men,’ etc., i.e. of the forces which have the furtherance of culture least at heart.⁴⁴

Burckhardt’s pessimism would strike a particularly strong chord in the 1860s, 70s, and 80s and even more so in the late 1940s and 50s with survivors of the Third Reich. A few years after publishing his historiographical review Gilbert wrote to his former teacher, Meinecke, noting that ‘in the present era, Burckhardt is increasingly emerging as a quite unique and powerful figure’.⁴⁵ Meinecke, who in *Die Deutsche Katastrophe* of 1946 acknowledged the moral failure of historians in not opposing Hitler, was forced like many others to reassess Burckhardt’s attitude to politics, which he did in a 1948 address entitled *Ranke und Burckhardt* delivered before the German Academy of Sciences in Berlin.⁴⁶ ‘The things we have lived through in the past fourteen years thrust before us quite novel aspects and problems in our own historical past... Burckhardt saw more deeply and acutely into the essential historical character of his own time. As a result, he was able to see the future, too, more definitely and certainly than Ranke could.’⁴⁷

Burckhardt’s neglect in the first decades of the twentieth century, that is his rejection of the *Machtstaat*, was the reason why, by the middle of the twentieth century, he was regarded as a penetrating, original, and independent thinker, an excellent judge or prophet of the nineteenth and twentieth century.⁴⁸ Early signs of his pessimism were traced back to *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*. But it was in conjunction with his clear-cut division of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance – and not as a result of the twentieth-century blurring of the two, as one

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 86. Lord Acton shared Burckhardt’s preoccupation with freedom, prompting him to describe *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* as ‘the most penetrating and subtle treatise on the history of civilization that exists in literature’ in Lord J. Dalberg-Acton, ‘The Borgias and their Latest Historians’, *The North British Review*, 53 (1871), pp. 351–67 reprinted in J. Acton, *Historical Essays and Studies*, ed. J.N. Figgis and R.V. Laurence (London, 1907), pp. 65–84, p. 65.

⁴⁵ F. Gilbert, ‘14 June 1947: Felix Gilbert to Friedrich Meinecke’ in G.A. Ritter, *German Refugee Historians and Friedrich Meinecke: Letters and Documents, 1910–1977*, ed. A. Skinner (Leiden, 2010), pp. 277–9, p. 277.

⁴⁶ F. Meinecke, *Die Deutsche Katastrophe: Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen* (Wiesbaden, 1946). Meinecke’s work was translated into English in 1950.

⁴⁷ F. Meinecke, ‘Ranke und Burckhardt’, *Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 27 (Berlin, 1948). All English translations are from H. Kohn (ed.), *German History: Some New German Views* (London, 1954), p. 144. On Meinecke’s essay, see J.L. Herkless, ‘Meinecke and the Ranke-Burckhardt Problem’, *History and Theory*, 9 (1970), pp. 290–321.

⁴⁸ L. Gossman, ‘Jacob Burckhardt: Cold War Liberal?’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 74 (2002), pp. 538–72, 538–9.

would think – that Burckhardt’s book eventually inspired a move away from tracing the origins of the power-state in the Renaissance and towards finding in it the roots of the modern concept of liberty as freedom from arbitrary rule and power that was lost during the *Machtergreifung* but now pervades modern historiography.

Hans Baron, another German-Jewish scholar who fled to the United States after 1933, had worked with his teacher Walter Goetz on a revised edition of Burckhardt’s *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* and, inspired by his academic father Ernst Troeltsch, was the first to use Burckhardt’s interpretation of the Renaissance as a route into studying the origins of modern republicanism.⁴⁹ He undertook this in his *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* of 1955. Baron’s book was, in his own words, ‘a defence of the old Burckhardtian and humanist view of the Renaissance against the modern blurring of Renaissance and Middle Ages’ found especially among North American scholars such as Lynn Thorndike, albeit not without considerable revisions.⁵⁰ Burckhardt, to cite Baron, ‘was searching not so much for the roots of a gradual evolution toward the modern world as for the first appearance of a clearly modern pattern of culture and thought within the framework of a modern state and for the emergence of the psychological and intellectual characteristics of modern man’.⁵¹ In other words, Burckhardt’s espousal of Wilhelm von Humboldt’s *Neuhumanismus* and, in Baron’s words, the ‘concept of a separation between individual culture and State’ meant that Burckhardt, in Baron’s view, had failed to recognise ‘the molding influence of a society in which citizens were compelled to be rulers as well as ruled... exposed to the competitive

⁴⁹ H. Baron, ‘4 April 1954: Hans Baron (Chicago) to Walter Goetz’ in G.A. Ritter, *German Refugee Historians*, pp. 306–9, p. 306. J. Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, ed. W. Goetz (Leipzig, 1925). On Troeltsch’s politics, see E. Kollman, ‘Eine Diagnose der Weimarer Republik: Ernst Troeltschs politische Anschauungen’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 182 (1956), pp. 291–319. Baron and Meinecke edited Troeltsch’s *Spektator-Briefe: Aufsätze über die deutsche Revolution und die Weltpolitik, 1918–22* in 1924. Troeltsch steered Baron towards Calvin for his doctoral dissertation: see H. Baron, *Calvins Staatsanschauung und das konfessionelle Zeitalter* (Munich, 1924).

⁵⁰ H. Baron, ‘15 October 1954: Hans Baron (Chicago) to Walter Goetz’ in G.A. Ritter, *German Refugee Historians*, pp. 310–17, p. 314. Cf. L. Thorndike, ‘Renaissance or Prenaissance?’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 4 (1943), pp. 65–74; E. Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen âge* (Paris, 1922).

⁵¹ H. Baron, ‘Burckhardt’s Civilization of the Renaissance a Century after Its Publication’, *Renaissance News*, 13 (1960), pp. 207–22 reprinted in H. Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism: Essays on the Transition from Medieval to Modern Thought* (2 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1988), ii, pp. 155–81, p. 165.

conditions of civic life'.⁵² Baron felt that the Burckhardian conception of the Renaissance could only carry full conviction if it also took into account the importance that city-state society had for the Italian Renaissance. So he went on to outline the relationship between the individual and society in Renaissance Italy with special reference to a sort of Sartrean *engagement* he claimed to have found in the writings of the time. Designed to counterbalance the northern perspective of Max Weber, Werner Sombart, and Ernst Troeltsch, Baron's *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* identified in the wars of 1389–1402 between the Republic of Florence and the Duchy of Milan a struggle between freedom and despotism that in 1402 forced humanists to articulate the first fully-formed defence of civic liberty and modern republicanism.⁵³

At the heart of Baron's Renaissance civic humanist ideology was a new perspective on history, namely from idolisation of the *Romanum Imperium* to vindications of the *Respublica Romana*. This entailed a new perspective on philosophy and politics involving a rejection of the life of contemplation (*vita contemplativa* or *otium*) for the active (*vita activa* or *negotium*). These changes, in his view, supplied the key elements underpinning modern society, namely constitutionalism, defence of private property, and self-government.⁵⁴ Machiavelli was no longer seen as a proponent of reason of state but as a republican whose *The Prince* of 1513 was but a brief aberration of the Florentine secretary's true sentiments.⁵⁵ The Chancellor of

⁵² H. Baron, 'Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance*' in *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, pp. 171–2. On German liberal neo-humanism as it applies to Burckhardt, see J.R. Hinde, *Jacob Burckhardt and the Crisis of Modernity* (Montreal, 2000), pp. 132–138.

⁵³ By 'crisis' Baron means 'a turning-point in the growth of an organism, institution, or people threatened by some weakness or disease, but finally regaining health and strength by successful resistance or adaption to a vital challenge.' See H. Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, p. 443. On the northern perspective of Weber, Sombart, and Troeltsch, see M. Weber, 'Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 20 (1904), pp. 1–54 and M. Weber, 'Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 21 (1905), pp. 1–110; W. Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig, 1911); E. Troeltsch, 'Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 97 (1906), pp. 1–66. These works are available in English translation, see M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, ed. T. Parsons and A. Giddens (London, 1930); W. Sombart, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*, ed. M. Epstein (London, 1913); E. Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World* (London, 1912).

⁵⁴ H. Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, pp. 39–44.

⁵⁵ H. Baron, 'Machiavelli: The Republican Citizen and the Author of *The Prince*', *The English Historical Review*, 76 (1961), pp. 217–53 reprinted in *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, ii, pp. 101–51; F. Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth Century Florence* (Princeton, N.J., 1965). Cf. F. Gilbert, 'The Humanist Concept of the Prince and *The Prince* of Machiavelli', *The Journal of*

Florence Leonardo Bruni's (1370–1444) panegyric *Laudatio florentinae urbis* (*In Praise of the City of Florence*) of 1404 represented the pivotal moment in Baron's chronology.⁵⁶ The *Laudatio* was quite simply 'the most vigorous and most complete expression' of the new complex of politico-historical ideas that arose during the struggle between Florence and Milan. 'Wherever we explore the trends of the historical philosophy of the Renaissance,' Baron noted, 'we find the *Laudatio* to be the pioneer to which must be traced the development that leads through Bruni's *History of the Florentine People* to Machiavelli and the other great Florentine historians of the late Renaissance.'⁵⁷

Baron's thesis proved influential and in the 1960s and 70s the historian of political thought J.G.A. Pocock developed Baron's ideas into a coherent albeit controversial theory of the origins of the American republican tradition.⁵⁸ Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment* of 1975 seriously undermined the established assumption that American political and philosophical thought was founded on Lockean individualism as was, for example, asserted by Louis Hartz in *The Liberal Tradition in America* of 1955.⁵⁹ Using Geoffrey Holmes's, William A. Speck's, John H. Plumb's, and J.R. Jones's studies on the English Enlightenment and Whig ideology of the seventeenth and eighteenth century as footholds, Pocock drew parallels between, on the one hand, notions of *governo stretto* and *largo* articulated by Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) respectively and, on the other, the court and country ideologies that entertained

Modern History, 11 (1939), pp. 449–83. On Baron's and Gilbert's Machiavelli, see G. Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli* (2 vols., Bologna, 1980–93), i, pp. 314–20 and P.A. Rahe, 'Situating Machiavelli' in J. Hankins (ed.), *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 270–308.

⁵⁶ Much ink has been spilt over the date of Bruni's *Laudatio*. Baron defended the 1404 date in his essay 'Chronology and Historical Certainty: The Dates of Bruni's *Laudatio* and *Dialogi*' in H. Baron, *From Petrarch to Leonardo Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political Literature* (Chicago, Ill., 1968), pp. 102–20. In recent years, it has been confirmed by Hankins in his article 'The Chronology of Leonardo Bruni's Later Works (1437–1443)', *Studi medievali e umanistici*, 6 (2010), pp. 1–40.

⁵⁷ H. Baron, *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, 191. See Leonardo Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*, ed. J. Hankins and D.J.W. Bradley (3 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 2001–7).

⁵⁸ J.G.A. Pocock, 'Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 22 (1965), pp. 549–83; J.G.A. Pocock, 'The Onely Politician: Machiavelli, Harrington and Felix Raab', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, 12 (1966), pp. 265–96.

⁵⁹ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J., 1975); L. Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York, N.Y., 1955). John Dunn had already questioned the influence of Locke on American political thought in his article 'The Politics of Locke in England and America' in J.W. Yolton (ed.), *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives* (Cambridge, 1969) and, later, in his *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treatises of Government'* (Cambridge, 1982).

British politics in the late seventeenth century.⁶⁰ ‘The Whig canon,’ he contended, ‘and the neo-Harringtonians... together with the Greek, Roman, and Renaissance masters of the [republican] tradition as far as Montesquieu, formed the authoritative literature of... a civic and patriot ideal in which the personality was founded in property, perfected in citizenship but perpetually threatened by corruption. A neoclassical politics’, in his view, ‘provided both the ethos of the elites and the rhetoric of the upwardly mobile, and accounts for the singular cultural and intellectual homogeneity of the Founding Fathers and their generation. Not all Americans were schooled in this tradition, but there was (it would almost appear) no alternative tradition in which to be schooled.’⁶¹

Pocock’s argument in *The Machiavellian Moment* shook the literature on the origins of American ideology to its core. However, its most decisive feature for students of the Renaissance was the overwhelming importance attributed to Aristotle’s *Politics*. Baron had couched the civic spirit of the Renaissance in the writings of Cicero. In his own words, ‘in the works of Cicero the voice of one of the last champions of the Roman Republic had been recorded, and thanks to the discovery of Cicero’s letters by the humanists it was heard again clearly from the mid-Trecento on. Thus the discussion of Cicero in the second half of the Trecento became a prelude to the rediscovery of the *Respublica Romana* in the early

⁶⁰ Pocock’s footholds are G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (London, 1967); G. Holmes, *The Trial of Dr. Sacheverell* (London, 1973); G. Holmes and W.A. Speck, *The Divided Society: Parties and Politics in England, 1694–1716* (London, 1967); W.A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: the Struggle for the Constituencies* (London, 1970); W.A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England, 1714–1760* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977); J.H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1660–1730* (London, 1969); J.R. Jones, *The First Whigs* (Oxford, 1961); J.R. Jones, *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (New York, N.Y., 1972); J.R. Jones, *Country and Court: England, 1658–1714* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978). Naturally, Baron expressed disappointment at Pocock’s different chronology and said so explicitly in a letter now lost but mentioned in the ‘Afterword’ to a later edition of *The Machiavellian Moment*, 2nd edn (Princeton, N.J., 2003), pp. 553–83, p. 555. By ‘moment’ Pocock means not just the ‘moment, and the manner, in which Machiavellian thought made its appearance’ but also ‘the moment in conceptualized time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude, as attempting to remain morally and politically stable in a stream of irrational events conceived as essentially destructive of all systems of secular stability’: see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. vii–viii. For further elaboration of Pocock’s thought, see J.G.A. Pocock, ‘The Machiavellian Moment Revisited: A Study in History and Ideology’, *Journal of Modern History*, 53 (1981), pp. 49–72 and ‘Between Gog and Magog: The Republican Thesis and the Ideologia Americana’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 48 (1987), pp. 325–46.

⁶¹ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 507.

Quattrocento.⁶² Pocock largely dismissed the Ciceronian element of Baron's narrative and identified Aristotle's *Politics* alone as the prime 'originator of a body of thought about the citizen and his relation to the republic, and about the republic (or polis) as a community of values' central to 'humanists and Italian thinkers in search of means of vindicating the universality and stability of the *vivere civile*'. He was quick to highlight the difficulties in assessing the role of Aristotle in this tradition of talking about civic life, virtue, and self-government. However, that tradition, which he equated with that of mixed government, was Aristotelian and the *Politics* formed, in his view, 'the earliest and greatest full exposition of it'.⁶³

Pocock's Aristotelian thesis found support in the works of Walter Ullmann and Nicolai Rubinstein, the first an Austrian-Jewish émigré, the second German-Jewish, who fled to England in the 1930s and found a safe haven in Cambridge and London respectively. For Ullmann, the Latinisation of Aristotle yielded 'a cosmological revolution which... displayed its greatest effects in the sphere of governmental science' and transformed political thought.⁶⁴ According to Rubinstein, it provided 'a unique key to the new world of urban politics'.⁶⁵ These views were present throughout *The Machiavellian Moment*. But Pocock was not the first to articulate them. They found earlier expression in studies by Martin Grabmann, Edward Cranz, Conor Martin, Rudolph von Albertini, and William J. Bouwsma.⁶⁶ But it was Pocock

⁶² H. Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, i, ch. 6. For Baron on Cicero, see H. Baron, 'Cicero and the Roman Civic Spirit in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 22 (1938), pp. 72–97 revised and reprinted in *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, i, pp. 94–133.

⁶³ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 67.

⁶⁴ W. Ullmann, *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages: An Introduction to the Sources of Medieval Political Ideas* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 269. See also W. Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London, 1961); W. Ullmann, *History of Political Thought in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1965); W. Ullmann, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, Md., 1966); M. Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1963).

⁶⁵ N. Rubinstein, 'Political Theories in the Renaissance' in A. Chastel *et al.* (eds.), *The Renaissance: Essays in Interpretation* (London, 1982), pp. 153–200, p. 153. See also N. Rubinstein, 'Florentine Constitutionalism and Medici Ascendancy in the Fifteenth Century' in N. Rubinstein (ed.), *Florentine Studies: Politics and Society in Renaissance Florence* (London, 1968), pp. 442–62; N. Rubinstein 'The History of the Word *politicus* in Early-Modern Europe' in A. Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, pp. 41–56.

⁶⁶ M. Grabmann, *Die mittelalterlichen Kommentare zur Politik des Aristoteles* (Munich, 1941); E.F. Cranz, 'Aristotelianism in Medieval Political Theory: A Study of the Reception of the Politics' (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1938); C. Martin, 'The Commentaries on the Politics of Aristotle in the Late Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Centuries, with Reference to the Thought and Political Life of the Time' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1949); R. von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955); W.J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter-Reformation* (Berkeley, Cal., 1968). On the reception of

who took the brunt of the criticisms. Two powerful critiques were levelled against him. One was that he exaggerated the republican character of Aristotle's political thought, thus distorting the distinction between the republican and the liberal paradigm.⁶⁷ The other was that he misrepresented the origins of early-modern republicanism, thereby bringing into question the portrait of Aristotle as architect of the classical republican tradition. From these critiques sprang a more thoroughgoing attack.

Pocock's genealogy was challenged in 1978 by his friend and contemporary Quentin Skinner in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. The central theme of Skinner's *Foundations* was the rise of the modern state. The book, however, had two further aims. The first was to give an outline of 'the principal texts of late medieval and early modern political thought'. The second was to illustrate the contextual approach to the study of the history of political thought inherited from Peter Laslett and J.L. Austin's theory of speech acts developed in Cambridge in the 1960s by Skinner alongside Pocock and John Dunn.⁶⁸ The result was a revolutionary overturning of traditional histories of political thought, such as Pierre Mesnard's, which treated the subject 'as a history of the so-called "classical texts"' producing successive chapters on the chief works of Machiavelli, Erasmus (1466–1536), More (1478–1535), Luther (1483–1546), Calvin (1509–64) and other major figures. By contrast, Skinner's *Foundations* avoided concentrating exclusively on leading theorists and instead focused on the context, or as he described it 'the more general social and intellectual matrix' out of which

Aristotle's Politics in the Middle Ages, see now C.F. Flüeler, *Rezeption und Interpretation der Aristotelischen Politica im späten Mittelalter* (2 vols., Amsterdam, 1992).

⁶⁷ C. Nadon, 'Aristotle and the Republican Paradigm: A Reconsideration of Pocock's *Machiavellian Moment*', *Review of Politics*, 58 (1996), pp. 677–98. On the question of republicanism versus liberalism more generally, see J.C. Isaac, 'Republicanism vs. Liberalism? A Reconsideration', *History of Political Thought*, 9 (1988), pp. 349–77.

⁶⁸ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. ix. The chief works associated with the 'Cambridge School' are J. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. P. Laslett (Cambridge, 1960); J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1962); J.G.A. Pocock, 'The History of Political Thought: A Methodological Enquiry' in P. Laslett and W.G. Runciman (eds.), *Politics, Philosophy and Society*, 2nd series (Oxford, 1962), pp. 183–202; J. Dunn, 'The Identity of the History of Ideas', *Philosophy*, 43 (1968), pp. 85–116; Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), pp. 3–53. The methodological essays of Pocock, Dunn, and Skinner have been collected in J.G.A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge, 2009); J. Dunn, *Political Obligation in Its Historical Context: Essays in Political Theory* (Cambridge, 2002); Q.R.D. Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (3 vols., Cambridge, 2002), i. Note that Pocock's methodology has always been more synchronistic than historical. See J.H. Geerken, 'Pocock and Machiavelli: Structuralist Explanation in History', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 17 (1979), pp. 309–18.

works arose. Skinner's starting point was what he judged to be 'the most relevant characteristics of the societies in and for which they originally wrote' and

the intellectual context in which the major texts were conceived – the context of earlier writings and inherited assumptions about political society, and of more ephemeral contemporary contributions to social and political thought. For it is evident that the nature and limits of the normative vocabulary available at any given time will also help to determine the ways in which particular questions come to be singled out and discussed.

Skinner tried, in his words, 'to write a history centred less on the classic texts and more on the history of ideologies'.⁶⁹ The history he began with was the rapid spread of city-republics in Northern Italy in the twelfth century.⁷⁰

Skinner traced Baron's civic humanism and Pocock's republicanism to before either Machiavelli or Bruni, that is back to the Roman moralists and historians, such as Cicero and Sallust, and to the medieval *dictatores* and Roman lawyers of the twelfth century whose works were couched, he believed, in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* and the writings of classical republicanism. The urban politics shaped by and interpreted through the Roman moralists and lawyers existed long before any crisis, moment, or revolution, according to Skinner.⁷¹ His thesis was eloquently restated in an article on Ambrogio Lorenzetti's (1290–1348) *Buon Governo* frescoes published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* in 1987.

The theories formulated by the *dictatores* not only preceded the so-called Aristotelian revolution but survived it virtually unchanged. The outcome was a distinctive view of citizenship that eventually broadened out into the so-called civic humanism of the Renaissance. It was from these humble origins, far more than from the impact of Aristotelianism, that the classical republicanism of Machiavelli, Guicciardini and their contemporaries originally stemmed. The political theory of the Renaissance, at all phases of its history, owes a far deeper debt to Rome than to Greece.⁷²

⁶⁹ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. xi.

⁷⁰ Ibid., i, p. 3. See D. Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (London, 1969); J.K. Hyde, *Society and Politics in Medieval Italy: The Evolution of the Civil Life, 1000-1350* (London, 1973).

⁷¹ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, pp. 1–65.

⁷² Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 72 (1987), pp. 1–56 revised in *Visions of Politics*, ii, pp. 39–92. Cf. N. Rubinstein, 'Political Ideas in Sienese Art: The Frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), pp. 179–207; N. Rubinstein, 'Le allegorie di

For Skinner, the first and ‘most unequivocal expression of a preference for Republican liberty over any other form of government’ was pronounced in Brunetto Latini’s (1210–94) *Li livres dou trésor* (*The Books of Treasure*) of around 1260.⁷³ Latini’s book, as with Ptolemy of Lucca’s (1236–1327) *De regimine principum* (*On the Rule of Princes*) of around 1305, was ‘underpinned by a new vision of ancient Rome and its history, a vision barely hinted at by the earlier rhetorical writers. The scholastic theorists *now* begin to think of the Republican period rather than the Empire as the age of Rome’s greatest excellence’.⁷⁴ This was a clear shift from Baron, who stressed the importance of both republic and empire.

Aristotle was not entirely absent from Skinner’s account. The ideals of peace and harmony (*pax et concordia*) described by Skinner in his account of Marsilius of Padua’s (1275–1342) *Defensor pacis* (*The Defender of Peace*) of 1324 as ‘the highest value in political life’ were essentially Aristotelian.⁷⁵ The direct relationship Aristotle established between faction and tyranny underpinned his conviction that civil discord was the prime threat to liberty. Skinner underscored this Aristotelian belief in his account of Bartolus of Sassoferrato’s (1313–57) *Tractatus de guelfis et ghibellinis* (*Tract on the Guelfs and Ghibellines*) of around 1355.⁷⁶ Questions about the ideal constitution found in Bartolus’ equally important *Tractatus de regimine civitatis* (*Tract on City Government*) of the same year were, according to Skinner, also answered ‘in Aristotelian vein’.⁷⁷

Despite Aristotle’s importance to early Renaissance thought, it was really Cato and Cicero who, according to Skinner, marked authors like Latini, Ptolemy, and Remigio dei Girolami (1235–1319). Yet, this thesis was held at the same time as Skinner showed ‘the somewhat ironic truth... that when Salutati, Bruni and their followers discuss the history of Rome, what they [we]re basically doing [was] ratifying and extending [the] essentially

Ambrogio Lorenzetti nella Sala della Pace e il pensiero del suo tempo’, *Rivista storica italiana*, 109 (1997), pp. 781–802.

⁷³ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. 41.

⁷⁴ Ibid., i, p. 54 (my own emphasis). Cf. J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 109.

⁷⁵ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. 56.

⁷⁶ Ibid., i, p. 57.

⁷⁷ Ibid., i, p. 53.

scholastic interpretation of the facts'.⁷⁸ Skinner's remarks about Aristotle's 'vital importance in the evolution of republican thought' and his belief that 'any attempt to excavate the foundations of modern political thought needs to begin with the recovery and translation of Aristotle's *Politics* and the consequent re-emergence of the idea that political philosophy constitutes an independent discipline worthy of study in its own right' ironically failed to rescue Aristotle from a demotion to the fringes of modern histories of political thought.⁷⁹ Today, the marginalisation of Aristotle in studies on the political theory of the Renaissance goes beyond discussions of republicanism, which Skinner has dubbed the neo-Roman tradition, and includes the whole range of literary genres and ideologies that coloured the Renaissance political-philosophical landscape. This has precipitated a historiography that tends to neglect Aristotle. For example, Peter Stacey believes early-modern mirror-for-princes are chiefly indebted to Seneca's *De clementia* rather than Aristotle's *Politics*.⁸⁰ For Virginia Cox, the rhetorical dimension of such advice-books is best explained in relation to Cicero, Quintilian, and the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* rather than Aristotle and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*.⁸¹ Patricia J. Osmond believes it is Sallust, rather than Aristotle, who deserves special consideration for his importance 'to both traditions – the republican and absolutist, the civic humanist and the prudential'.⁸² For Kenneth Schellhase, it is the rediscovery of Tacitus rather than the *Politics* that was revolutionary.⁸³ Outside of discussions of Venetian panegyrics, such as Donato Giannotti's (1492–1573) *La repubblica de' Viniziani* (*The Republic of the Venetians*) of 1540, Gasparo Contarini's (1483–1542) *De magistratibus*

⁷⁸ Ibid., i, pp. 54–55 and 82.

⁷⁹ Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and the pre-humanist origins of republican ideas' in G. Bock et al. (eds.), *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 121–41, p. 122; Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, ii, p. 348.

⁸⁰ P. Stacey, *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince* (Cambridge, 2012).

⁸¹ V. Cox, 'Machiavelli and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: Deliberative Rhetoric in *The Prince*', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28 (1997), pp. 1109–41. Cf. J.F. Tinkler, 'Praise and Advice: Rhetorical Approaches in More's *Utopia* and Machiavelli's *Prince*', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), pp. 187–207. The practice of reading Renaissance political literature in a rhetorical key has its apotheosis in V. Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric from the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton, N.J., 1994).

⁸² P.J. Osmond, "'Princeps Historiae Romanae': Sallust in Renaissance Political Thought', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 40 (1995), pp. 101–43.

⁸³ K. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago, Ill., 1976). See also, G. Toffanin, *Machiavelli e il 'Tacitismo': la 'politica storica' al tempo della Controriforma* (Padua, 1921); P. Burke, 'A Survey of the Popularity of Ancient Historians, 1450–1700', *History and Theory*, 5 (1966), pp. 135–52.

et república venetorum (*On the Commonwealth and Government of Venice*) of 1543, and Paolo Paruta's (1540–98) *Discorsi politici* (*Political Discourses*) of 1599, Aristotle seldom features in modern histories of political thought.⁸⁴

Skinner's genealogy has obviously not been immune from criticism. Cary J. Nederman, Paul A. Rahe, and Mark Jurdjevic have all been critical about, among other things, Skinner's interpretation of Machiavelli and republicanism.⁸⁵ On balance, however, attacks have generally centred on his methodology rather than exegesis, leaving Skinner's neo-Roman narrative intact.⁸⁶ Maurizio Viroli's *From Politics to Reason of State* of 1992 is refreshing in that, despite sharing similar concerns to Skinner's, Viroli recognises that 'most of the vocabulary of [Renaissance] politics was borrowed from the works of Aristotle'.⁸⁷ He therefore offers a number of brief outlines of some neglected Aristotelian sources in his book, such as Antonio Brucioli's (1498–1566) *Dialogi* (*Dialogues*) of 1526–44, Alessandro Piccolomini's (1508–79) *Della istituzione dell'uomo* (*On the Education of Man*) of 1542, Bernardo Segni's (1504–58) *Trattato dei governi d'Aristotile* (*Treatises on Governments of Aristotle*) of 1549, and Felice Figliucci's (1525–90) *De la Politica* (*On the Politics*) of 1583. In Italian historiography, one of the very few studies to have shown some interest in Renaissance readers of Aristotle, albeit with grave

⁸⁴ On the myth of Venice in Renaissance political thought, see W.J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defence of Republican Liberty*; F. Gaeta, 'Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de Renaissance*, 23 (1961), pp. 58–75; F. Gilbert, 'The Date of the Composition of Contarini's and Giannotti's Books on Venice', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 14 (1967), pp. 172–84; M.P. Gilmore, 'Myth and Reality in Venetian Political Theory' in J.R. Hale (ed.), *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 431–44; D. Robey and J.E. Law, 'The Venetian Myth and the "De Republica veneta" of Pier Paolo Vergerio', *Rinascimento*, 25 (1975), pp. 3–59; G. Silvano, *La 'Repubblica de' Viniziani'. Recherche sul repubblicanismo veneziano in età moderna* (Florence, 1993); R. Finlay, 'The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494–1530)', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30 (1999), pp. 931–44. On Donato Giannotti, see H. Soldini, 'Les Républiques de Donato Giannotti: une biographie d'un républicain florentin du xvi^e siècle' (2 vols, Ph.D. thesis, European University Institute, 2014).

⁸⁵ C.J. Nederman, 'Rhetoric, Reason, and Republic: Republicanisms – Ancient, Medieval, and Modern' in J. Hankins (ed.), *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, pp. 247–69; P.A. Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992); M. Jurdjevic, 'Machiavelli's Hybrid Republicanism', *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007), pp. 1228–57. Nederman takes issue with Skinner's failure to acknowledge different republican models. Rahe takes issue with Skinner's understanding of republican liberty as articulated in Q.R.D. Skinner, 'The Republican Ideal of Political Liberty' in G. Bock *et al.* (eds.), *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, pp. 293–309 and Q.R.D. Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1988). Jurdjevic takes issue with Skinner's depiction of Machiavelli's republicanism as static, preferring to talk about a 'hybrid' republicanism that changed through time.

⁸⁶ J. Tully and Q.R.D. Skinner (eds.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Cambridge, 1988); A.S. Brett *et al.* (eds.), *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2006).

⁸⁷ M. Viroli, 'Machiavelli and the Republican Idea of Politics' in Bock *et al.* (eds.), *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, pp. 143–71, p. 146 and *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp. 201–80.

misrepresentations, is Rodolfo de Mattei's *Il pensiero politico italiano nell'età della controriforma* of 1982.⁸⁸ Viroli's and De Mattei's studies, however, are exceptions to the rule. In Anglophone scholarship, historians generally look no further than Guicciardini for the values and politics of the modern world and, while virtually no one in recent years has gone as far as to claim that the recovery of the *Politics* in the late Middle Ages was inconsequential, most historians follow Skinner in expressing reservations about its revolutionary impact. This is especially true in evaluations of the impact of Aristotle's theory of political naturalism, namely the idea that political association is born out of human nature and not divine inspiration.⁸⁹ The emphasis on the role of rhetorical education in the formulation of early-modern republican political theory has of course prompted some medievalists, like Janet Coleman, to explore the interaction of Aristotle's rhetorical and moral thought in the late Middle Ages.⁹⁰ This, however, has seldom if ever extended to beyond the early *Quattrocento*. In short then, while Skinner's contextualist methodology could have effectively freed Aristotelian political theory in the Renaissance from the neglect suffered at the hands of doxographies, modern perceptions of early-modern political thought have yet to justify looking at Aristotle in Renaissance political thought. Only one effort to rescue the Greek (largely Platonic) tradition from Skinner's neo-Roman genealogy has been successful, and claims of the assiduity and

⁸⁸ R. de Mattei, *Il pensiero politico italiano nell'età della controriforma* (2 vols., Naples, 1982–4). See also L. Firpo, 'Umanesimo e Rinascimento' in L. Firpo (ed.), *Storia delle idee politiche, economiche e sociali* (6 vols., Turin, 1972–87), iii. For a useful bibliography of Italian studies in the history of political thought before Firpo, see R. De Mattei, *Gli studi italiani di storia del pensiero politico (saggio storico bibliografico)* (Bologna, 1951).

⁸⁹ E.F. Fortin, 'Politique et philosophie au Moyen Âge: la révolution aristotélicienne' in B.C. Bazan *et al.* (eds.), *Les philosophies morales et politiques au Moyen Âge* (3 vols., New York, N.Y., 1995), i, pp. 148–66 is an extreme case. Fairer and more sober views can be found in G. Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State, 1100–1322* (Princeton, N.J., 1964), pp. 494–560; F. Oakley, 'Celestial Hierarchies Revisited: Walter Ullmann's Vision of Medieval Politics', *Past and Present*, 60 (1973), pp. 3–48; C.J. Nederman, 'Aristotelianism and the Origins of "Political Science" in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52 (1991), pp. 179–94; C.J. Nederman, 'Nature, Sin and the Origins of Society: The Ciceronian Tradition in Medieval Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49 (1988), pp. 3–26 reprinted in C.J. Nederman, *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits: Classical Traditions in Moral and Political Philosophy, 12th–15th Centuries* (London, 1997); A. Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250–1450* (Cambridge, 1992).

⁹⁰ J. Coleman, 'Some Relations Between the Study of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, *Ethics* and *Politics* in Late Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century University Arts Courses and the Justification of Contemporary Civic Activities (Italy and France)' in J.P. Canning and O.G. Oexle (eds.), *Political Thought and the Realities of Power in the Middle Ages* (Göttingen, 1998), pp. 127–58.

ubiquity of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance are generally made *en passant* and rest on weak and circumstantial evidence.⁹¹

In the last decade though, some of Skinner's assumptions have come under intense fire. This has paved the way for a reconsideration of the role of Aristotelian philosophy in Renaissance political thought. The objects of these critiques are Skinner's reliance on and refinement of Kristeller's interpretation of Renaissance humanism and Skinner's interpretation of Renaissance political thought, that is the idea that the political theory of the Renaissance owes a deeper debt to Rome than to Greece. The publication of catalogues of Renaissance Aristotelian literature have made scholars aware of just how pervasive Aristotle's political ideas were in the Renaissance. It makes sense, however, to return to the nineteenth century and explain the backdrop to Skinner's ideas.

III. HUMANISM AND SCHOLASTICISM IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

Renaissance humanism first became a field of study with Georg Voigt's *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Altertums* of 1859 and Burckhardt's *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, though neither of them had very positive things to say about it. For Voigt, 'the unbalanced pursuit of antiquity turned its devotees in a certain sense into idealists and fanatics. In their writings, they were entirely guided by the urge to imitate. This is always a limited and childish activity, but in his enthusiasm the imitator is not aware of this.'⁹² For Burckhardt, 'the rapid progress of humanism after the year 1400 paralyzed native impulses. Henceforth men looked only to antiquity for the solution of every problem, and consequently allowed literature to sink into mere quotation.'⁹³ Nevertheless, despite the contradictory stances of the literature of Renaissance humanism, from the fanatical to the banal, both maintained that humanists embodied the shift from theocentrism to anthropocentrism that characterised the

⁹¹ E. Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁹² G. Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Altertums: oder der erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus*, (Berlin, 1859). All English translations are from G. Voigt, 'A New World in Italy' in D. Hay (ed.), *The Renaissance Debate* (New York, N.Y., 1965), pp. 29–34, p. 33.

⁹³ J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 103.

Renaissance. Thus, for the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth, this movement was described by historians such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Giovanni Gentile, and Ernst Cassirer as a new philosophy of man, couched in individualism and secularism.⁹⁴

This all changed before the middle of the twentieth century. Humanism had been a subject of serious debate during the war and post-war period among Continental philosophers like Antonio Gramsci, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Karl Jaspers.⁹⁵ In America it had become a secular religion couched in the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson and with people like John Dewey as apostles.⁹⁶ In the mid-1940s, however, Paul Oskar Kristeller, a German-Jewish émigré to America and former student of Heidegger's, began formulating 'a radically historicized interpretation of Renaissance humanism' against 'the unhistorical and often politicized interpretations of humanism he saw multiplying around him'.⁹⁷ This shift from a diachronic approach endorsed by contemporary humanist and existentialist philosophers like Garin to a synchronic one was first presented in an article entitled 'Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance' published in *Byzantion* in 1945.

Taking up certain expressions found in Cicero and Gellius, the humanists as early as the fourteenth century began to call their field of learning the humane studies or the studies befitting a human

⁹⁴ W. Dilthey, *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation: Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Religion* in volume 2 of W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. G. Misch (Stuttgart, 1914); G. Gentile, 'Il concetto dell'uomo nel rinascimento', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 67 (1916), pp. 17–75 reprinted in G. Gentile, *Il pensiero italiano del rinascimento*, 3rd edn (Florence, 1955), pp. 49–113; E. Cassirer, *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Leipzig, 1927). Cf. G. Toffanin, *La religione degli umanisti* (Bologna, 1950). See C. Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy* (Baltimore, Md., 2004); R. Rubini, *The Other Renaissance: Italian Humanism between Hegel and Heidegger* (Chicago, Ill., 2014).

⁹⁵ A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. F. Platone (Turin, 1948–51); M. Heidegger, *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit: Mit einem Brief über den 'Humanismus'* (Bern, 1947), pp. 53–119; J.P. Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris, 1946); K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Zurich, 1949).

⁹⁶ R.W. Emerson, *An Address Delivered Before the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, Sunday Evening, 15 July, 1838* (Boston, Mass., 1838); J. Dewey, 'What Humanism Means to Me', *The Thinker*, 2 (June, 1930), pp. 9–12 reprinted in J. Dewey, *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, ed. J.A. Boydston (17 vols., Carbondale, Ill., 1981–90), v, pp. 263–6.

⁹⁷ J. Hankins, 'Two Twentieth-Century Interpreters of Renaissance Humanism: Eugenio Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller', *Comparative Criticism*, 23 (2001), pp. 3–19 reprinted in J. Hankins, *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., Rome, 2004), i, pp. 573–90, p. 584. See also J. Monfasani, 'Toward the Genesis of the Kristeller Thesis of Renaissance Humanism: Four Bibliographical Notes', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 53 (2000), pp. 1156–73; J. Hankins, 'Renaissance Philosophy Between God and the Devil' in A.J. Grieco *et al.* (eds.), *The Italian Renaissance in the Twentieth Century* (Florence, 2009), pp. 265–89 reprinted in *Humanism and Platonism*, i, pp. 591–615; J. Hankins, 'Garin and Paul Oskar Kristeller'.

being (*studia humanitatis*, *studia humaniora*). The new name certainly implies a new claim and program, but it covered a content that had existed long before and that had been designated by the modest names of grammar, rhetoric, and poetry. Although some modern scholars were not aware of this fact, the humanists certainly were, and we have several contemporary testimonies showing that the *studia humanitatis* were considered as the equivalent of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy.⁹⁸

The Italian historian Augusto Campana would shortly after reach similar conclusions about the word *humanista* and *studia humanitatis* in 1946.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, he would fail to see the medieval roots of this tradition. Only a handful of scholars like Ernst Kantorowicz and Helene Wieruszowski found ties between the medieval rhetoricians and Renaissance humanists, though there was no ‘direct professional and literary connection’ in Kristeller’s view.¹⁰⁰

Kristeller’s interpretation proved immediately and immensely popular. Naturally, in Italian historiography Garin’s more philosophical idea of Renaissance humanism as ‘a renewed confidence in man and his possibilities and... an appreciation of man’s activity in every possible sense’ kept its hold for a while.¹⁰¹ In Anglophone historiography Kristeller’s definition soon became the orthodoxy for reasons he revealed in a 1962 survey on the literature on Renaissance humanism. Renaissance humanism had been defined in a variety of ways in Anglophone historiography. In Kristeller’s view many of these definitions had been ‘either inexplicit or fluctuating or inadequate’.¹⁰²

The relation of Renaissance humanism to such other historical phenomena as scholasticism or the Reformation, modern science or modern philosophy, has been interpreted and evaluated in many

⁹⁸ P.O. Kristeller, ‘Humanism and Scholasticism’ in *Studies*, i, pp. 572–3. Cf. E. Garin, *Der italienische Humanismus* (Bern, 1947). As Hankins remarked, it is not a coincidence that Garin’s essay appeared in the same book series as Heidegger’s letter, that is *Sammlung Überlieferung und Auftrag*.

⁹⁹ A. Campana, ‘The Origin of the Word ‘Humanist’’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 9 (1946), pp. 60–73.

¹⁰⁰ P.O. Kristeller ‘Humanism and Scholasticism’ in *Studies*, i, p. 560, fn. 21. Cf. E. Kantorowicz, ‘Anonymi ‘Aurea gemma’’, *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 1 (1943), pp. 41–57; H. Wieruszowski, ‘“Ars dictamini” in the Time of Dante’, *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 1 (1943), pp. 95–108.

¹⁰¹ E. Garin, *L’umanesimo italiano: filosofia e vita civile nel Rinascimento* (Bari, 1952). All English translations are from E. Garin, *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance*, ed. P. Munz (Oxford, 1965), p. 221.

¹⁰² P.O. Kristeller, ‘Studies on Renaissance Humanism During the Last Twenty Years’, *Studies in the Renaissance*, 9 (1962), pp. 7–30 in *Studies*, ii, pp. 25–48, p. 26.

different ways, as has been its originality, or lack of originality, in relation to its ancient and medieval sources. Moreover, there has been some disagreement about the chronological limits of humanism... Another problem... concerns the geographical diffusion of Renaissance humanism and the relative rôle assigned to Italian humanism... Finally, ... humanism has been studied by scholars from different historical disciplines, who have been working at cross purposes, and have tended to emphasize divergent aspects of the movement, although the modern division of historical disciplines does not coincide with that of the humanistic disciplines as they were understood during the Renaissance.¹⁰³

Kristeller preferred, in his own words, ‘to assign no specific chronological dates to Renaissance humanism, but to treat it rather as a distinct facet that belongs to the whole Renaissance period in all its phases’.¹⁰⁴ He believed that ‘the best hope for bringing the problem of humanism closer to a satisfactory solution, just as for the Renaissance problem’, rested in recapturing and using ‘the self-interpretation, or Renaissance interpretation, of the humanists and of their work’.¹⁰⁵ This solution proved effective and popular. It filtered into the history of political ideas by way of Skinner’s *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*.

Kristeller’s definition held special allure for Skinner. First, it enabled Skinner ‘to assign a precise and non-anachronistic meaning to the term “humanism”’. This allowed him to make more subtle Burckhardt’s old, and by extension Baron’s and Pocock’s newer, thesis of a sharp break between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (though Skinner’s reworking of it was never as subtle as Kristeller’s).¹⁰⁶ Second, it located the *dictatores* in a central place in Renaissance intellectual history. This gave Skinner the opportunity to emphasise the rhetorical (read Roman) nature of civic humanism while downplaying its philosophical (read Greek) character. According to Skinner, Kristeller had ‘decisively punctured’ the myth of humanism as a new philosophical movement ‘by showing... that most of the so-called “humanists” were in fact professional teachers and exponents of the rhetorical arts, and were

¹⁰³ Ibid., ii, pp. 26–7.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., ii, p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., ii, p. 27.

¹⁰⁶ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. 102. On a similar non-anachronistic idea of a sharp break the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see T. Mommsen, ‘Petrarch’s Conception of the “Dark Ages”’, *Speculum*, 17 (1942), pp. 226–42; M. McLaughlin, ‘Humanist Concepts of Renaissance and Middle Ages in the Tre- and Quattrocento’, *Renaissance Studies*, 2 (1988), pp. 131–42. Jules Michelet has often been credited with inventing the term ‘Renaissance’ in 1855.

thus concerned with an aspect of Italian civic culture which was neither novel nor essentially philosophical in character'.¹⁰⁷

Despite these debts to Kristeller, Skinner was forced to elaborate on key aspects of Kristeller's definition that gave rise to ambiguities and theories in conflict with Skinner's interpretation of Renaissance political theory. There was a tendency by scholars such as Jerrold Seigel to use Kristeller's interpretation to argue that Renaissance humanism was largely a self-contained phenomenon with no outstanding civic character. Skinner's response to Seigel's 'internalistic' account, which downplayed the socio-political dimension of this movement, was to question 'why it happened that these particular arguments [for republican liberty] were revived in one particular generation – and with such particular intensity – at the beginning of the fifteenth century'. His own answer was that 'in reviving and extending the available traditions of Republican political theory, [humanists] may in part have been prompted by a patriotic desire – or by a wish to seem to have the patriotic desire – to celebrate and defend the liberties of Florence against the continuing threat of domination by Visconti Milan'.¹⁰⁸ Such a response realigned Skinner with Baron in ways often ignored by contemporary historians.

The more crucial point about Kristeller's interpretation that Skinner revised was the interaction between humanists and scholastics. For Skinner, Kristeller and his followers had of course not failed 'to emphasise the hostility of the humanists to the rise of scholasticism in Italy. But they have perhaps tended to underestimate its substantive significance'.¹⁰⁹ To be sure, Skinner never endorsed Joseph Lecler's naïve or simplistic representation of humanism as superseding scholasticism.¹¹⁰ The philosophical reflections of Pietro Pomponazzi and George of Trebizond were 'enough to indicate that Aristotelian philosophy continued to flourish and develop throughout the later *quattrocento*' while Giannozzo Manetti's (1396–1459)

¹⁰⁷ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. 102.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., i, p. 103. Cf. J.E. Seigel, "'Civic Humanism' or Ciceronian Rhetoric? The Culture of Petrarch and Bruni", *Past and Present*, 34 (1966), pp. 3–48; D. Robey, 'P.P. Vergerio the Elder: Republicanism and Civic Values in the Work of an Early Humanist', *Past and Present*, 58 (1973), pp. 3–37. I should point out that Skinner reinforces the old Burckhardtian idea of a break between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

¹⁰⁹ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. 104.

¹¹⁰ J. Lecler, *Histoire de la tolérance au siècle de la Réforme* (2 vols., Paris, 1955).

writings ‘reveal how far it was possible to combine a classical outlook with the pursuit of a number of essentially scholastic interests’.¹¹¹ The problem for Skinner, however, was that most scholars assumed that scholasticism and humanism simply ‘co-existed’, which was not the case for him.

This underestimates the growing confidence with which the humanists were in fact willing to invade scholastic fields of study, to denounce their rivals for continuing to follow benighted methods, and so to insist with increasing imperialism on the need for the special techniques of humanism to be put to use throughout the entire spectrum of the intellectual disciplines. It seems essential for this range of considerations to be given much greater prominence if a satisfactory explanation for the rise of a distinctively humanist moral and political theory is to be reached.¹¹²

Skinner substantiated his position by storming familiar territory, namely the humanist attack on the methodology of the Roman lawyers. The combative Renaissance philologist Lorenzo Valla (1407–57) was his poster boy. Not only did Valla condemn the barbarous language of the scholastics, but he attacked their traditional ahistorical and purely textual approach to Justinian’s Code in ways all too reminiscent of Skinner’s own criticism of contemporary methodology in the history of political thought. For Skinner, ‘this rejection of scholastic methodology played a key role in helping to establish a genuinely historical jurisprudence’.¹¹³ More importantly though, it allowed Skinner to vindicate his point about the humanists’ charge against the scholastics’ ‘benighted methods’.

Method, as Skinner highlighted, was only one facet of the distinction between humanists and scholastics. Valla and Petrarch (1304–74) before him went far beyond method to lambast their rivals’ characteristic preoccupations and their inconsequence.¹¹⁴ ‘I snarl at the stupid Aristotelians,’ Petrarch wrote in his *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* (*On his Own Ignorance and That of Many Others*) of 1367. ‘It is better to will the good than to know the truth... those

¹¹¹ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. 105.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, i, p. 105.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, i, p. 106.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. 106.

are far wrong who consume their time in learning to know virtue instead of acquiring it'.¹¹⁵ For Skinner, 'these denunciations again played a positive role in helping to crystallise some of the most characteristic values and attitudes of the humanists', namely their 'increasing interest in the experimental sciences and the practical arts' and their 'rejection of scholastic abstraction'.¹¹⁶ Crucially, 'the same animus against the alleged remoteness of scholastic studies also helps to account for some of the characteristic emphases of humanist social and political thought'.

It helps in the first place to explain the growing belief that a life devoted to pure leisure and contemplation (*otium*) is far less likely to be of value – or even to foster wisdom – than a life in which the pursuit of useful activity (*negotium*) is most highly prized... [It] also helps to account for the special emphasis which the early *quattrocento* humanists place on the importance of addressing their writings to the whole body of their fellow citizens. This again represents a radical departure from the intellectual traditions they had inherited.¹¹⁷

Thus we witness, in Skinner's view, 'a new vision of history' that left humanists with an 'elevated sense of their own position in the ever-changing cycle of events'. This gave Skinner grounds to focus on the republican tradition.¹¹⁸

Skinner's understanding of Renaissance humanism, however, rested on shaky ground. Kristeller's dichotomy between humanists and scholastics had always been a point of contention even among scholars who shared his general framework – and not in ways that favoured Skinner's refinement. Charles Trinkaus noted, for example, how for some humanists like Bartolomeo della Fonte (1446–1513) there existed 'for the professor of eloquence the need to know and expound everything that comes up in literature and hence to be concerned with what might be termed "general philosophy" as distinguished from the special technical

¹¹⁵ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance and that of Many Others*, translated by H. Nachod in E. Cassirer *et al.* (eds.), *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago, Ill., 1948), pp. 49–133, p. 107. Note that in the following chapters I use a different translation.

¹¹⁶ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. 107.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, i, p. 109.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, i, p. 110.

branches subserving the professions or faculties of medicine, law, and theology'.¹¹⁹ This idea of humanists sharing with the scholastics more than just an interest in moral philosophy has found new life in the works of scholars such as Jill Kraye, who has shown how 'a number of high profile humanists and humanist projects went beyond moral philosophy and engaged with a much broader spectrum of the philosophical canon' which nevertheless remained predominantly Aristotelian.¹²⁰ Those wishing to avoid the charge of anachronism might prefer to stay faithful to Kristeller's definition, but they should be prepared to accept that humanists were concerned with more than just the *studia humanitatis* in Cicero's and Gellius's sense and that in their quest for a dialogue with the ancients they often defied a narrow and ill-fitting definition of *humanista*.¹²¹

Skinner's interpretation of Renaissance scholasticism is similarly fragile. There are many instances in which the overlapping interest in moral philosophy provided the schoolmen with an excuse for occasional forays into humanistic territory, as epitomised by Agostino Nifo (1473–1545). One of the leading Renaissance Aristotelians of his generation, Nifo is best known among historians of philosophy for his debate with the Italian philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) on the immortality of the soul and the plethora of Renaissance commentaries on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, *Sophistical Refutations*, *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *On the Heavens*, *On Generation and Corruption*, *Meteorology*, *On the Soul*, *On the Movement of Animals*, *On the Generation of Animals*, *On the History of Animals*, *On the Parts of Animals*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, and *The Art of Rhetoric*.¹²² In the realm of political ideas he is

¹¹⁹ C.H. Trinkaus, 'A Humanist's Image of Humanism: The Inaugural Orations of Bartolomeo della Fonte', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 7 (1960), pp. 90–147, p. 124: 'while this might exclude except in a general way logic, mathematics, and natural philosophy, it would certainly include, besides the ethics and political theory common to the humanist, at least excursions into metaphysics and theology, although the humanist would be apt to approach these in a superficial, peripheral, and eclectic way'.

¹²⁰ J.A. Kraye, 'Beyond Moral Philosophy'.

¹²¹ P.O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanistic Strains* (New York, N.Y., 1961), p. 10; B.G. Kohl, 'The Changing Concept of the *Studia Humanitatis* in the Early Renaissance', *Renaissance Studies*, 6 (1992), pp. 185–202, p. 186.

¹²² On the Nifo-Pomponazzi debate on the immortality of the soul, see E. Gilson, 'Autour de Pomponazzi: problématique de l'immortalité de l'âme en Italie au début du xvi^e siècle', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 36 (1961), pp. 163–279 reprinted E. Gilson, *Humanisme et Renaissance* (Paris, 1983), pp. 133–249; E. Kessler, 'The Intellectual Soul' in Schmitt *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 485–534. For a list of Nifo's Renaissance commentaries on Aristotle, see C.H. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, pp. 282–7.

famed for his *De regnandi peritia* (*On the Art of Governing*) of 1523, a creative plagiarism and scholastic remodelling of Machiavelli's *Prince*.¹²³ Nifo, however, was also the author of several humanistic tracts on love, nobility, the court, and the ideal ruler collected and edited by the French librarian Gabriel Naudé (1600–53) under the title *Opuscula moralia et politica* (*Moral and Political Works*) in 1645.¹²⁴ Taken alone, they provide a rather different portrait of Nifo to the one intellectual historians are familiar with and force us to reconsider Kristeller's and Skinner's somewhat rigid dichotomy between humanism and scholasticism.

This re-evaluation of Renaissance humanism and scholasticism invites questions about the ways in which Aristotelian ideas may have filtered into, or even been integral to, humanist thought, thus permeating Renaissance political literature. The Chancellor of Florence Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), for example, entertained close relationships with several scholastic philosophers, such as the Dominican friar Giovanni Dominici (1356–1419), author of the *Lucula noctis* (*Firefly*) of around 1400 in which he challenges the primacy of the *studia humanitatis* and which, as Berthold L. Ullman has shown, deeply influenced Salutati's *De laboribus Herculis* (*On the Labours of Hercules*) of 1406.¹²⁵

There is, however, an altogether more crucial and controversial point to be made about modern perceptions of Renaissance political thought in current scholarship. Skinner's emphasis on what he dubbed 'neo-Roman ideology' and the idea that it excludes other ideologies has come under intense scrutiny. This re-appraisal of the ubiquity and nature of Renaissance republicanism, more than the re-evaluation of Renaissance humanism, warrants an obvious reconsideration of the importance of Aristotle in Renaissance political thought.

IV. THE POLITICAL THEORY OF THE RENAISSANCE IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

¹²³ S. Anglo, *Machiavelli, The First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 42–84.

¹²⁴ P.O. Kristeller, 'Between the Italian Renaissance and the French Enlightenment: Gabriel Naudé as an Editor', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 32 (1979), pp. 41–72 reprinted in *Studies*, iii, pp. 613–43.

¹²⁵ B.L. Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Padua, 1963).

The idea that the political theory of the Renaissance is more Roman than Greek pervades modern historiography. It rests, however, on the belief that Baron's civic humanism, Pocock's classical republicanism, or Skinner's neo-Roman ideology were the dominant system of beliefs at the time. Republicanism was an important aspect of Renaissance political thought. But it does not represent the dominant ideology of the age. Kristeller was one of the first to argue this in a 1961 essay on intellectual history and the Renaissance.

Attractive as the ideal of civic humanism may be to some of us, it was largely limited to Florence, and even there it prevailed only a relatively short period. There were proponents of the contemplative life, and of monarchic government, among the Italian humanists, and they were no less humanistic in their training and cultural outlook for that reason. Hence I do not think that Bruni's civic humanism can serve for a general definition of Renaissance humanism, and apparently this is not even Professor Baron's intention.¹²⁶

Baron, in fact, spoke freely about wider aspects of Renaissance humanism in a general introduction to the subject.¹²⁷ This, though, did nothing to stop civic humanism in all its modern variants from ostensibly becoming the paradigm of Renaissance political thought.

Skinner and his Cambridge followers were instrumental in turning republicanism and the resulting Roman story into a leitmotif in Anglophone historiography. Much like Baron's civic humanism, however, this focus on republicanism has raised many questions. Skinner's *Foundations* was a means to vindicate, among other things, a particular approach to the study of intellectual history and the history of political thought. Skinner's own contextual shortcomings, however, were highlighted by the English conservative political philosopher Michael Oakeshott in a review of *The Foundations* of 1980. The central theme of Skinner's book was the rise of the modern state. Oakeshott took this to mean that Skinner was suggesting two things: first, that there was a shift from 'the idea of a ruler maintaining his

¹²⁶ P.O. Kristeller, 'Changing Views of the Intellectual History of the Renaissance since Jacob Burckhardt' in T. Helton, *The Renaissance: A Reconsideration of the Theories and Interpretations of the Age* (Madison, Wis., 1961), pp. 27–52 reprinted in *Studies*, ii, pp. 3–23, p. 10.

¹²⁷ H. Baron, 'Fifteenth-Century Civilisation and the Renaissance' in G.R. Potter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History* (14 vols., Cambridge, 1957–79), i, pp. 50–75 reprinted in *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, i, pp. 3–39.

state' to that of the state as a separate entity from both the ruler and the ruled which constitutes 'supreme political authority within a defined territory';¹²⁸ second, that writers of the period were beginning to understand and justify the state as a community of individuals 'related to one another, not in virtue of common religious beliefs or in the pursuit of any common substantive purpose, but in terms of a law, ruled by a government (constituted in some acceptable manner) whose office... is to maintain the "peace" and security of the association, and whose authority in respect of this office is "sovereign".'¹²⁹ The first suggestion puzzled Oakeshott. The second made him wonder:

is it not 'unhistorical', anachronistic, to think of [the state] as a construction erected on 'foundations' laid by Marsiglio, Bartolus, Machiavelli, Beza, etc.? These writers were not laying foundations: they were casuistical moralists and lawyers fumbling for circumstantial arguments to support their clients, which stood in the way of or threatened their independence. Is there not some confusion here between the analytical components of a concept and the devious and often logically irrelevant historical circumstances which mediated its emergence? Such concepts are, no doubt, the products of an engagement to formulate them; but historically they are the by-products of a variety of local encounters of ideas not all of which pull in its direction.¹³⁰

Skinner was later forced to concede the flaw in talking of 'foundations'. He admitted in an interview to Petri Koikkalainen and Sami Syrjämäki that he had wrongly employed 'a metaphor that virtually commits one to writing teleologically. My own book is far too much concerned with the origins of our present world when I ought to have been trying to represent the world I was examining in its own terms so far as possible.'¹³¹ Critics, such as Dario Castiglione and David Wootton, agreed. Both emphasised the problem of talking about republicanism in the early-modern period as a single unified tradition, noting instead the

¹²⁸ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i, p. x and *The Foundations*, ii, p. 353.

¹²⁹ M. Oakeshott, 'Review: *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* by Q.R.D. Skinner', *The Historical Journal*, 23 (1980), pp. 449–53, p. 452.

¹³⁰ M. Oakeshott, 'Review: *The Foundations*', p. 452.

¹³¹ P. Koikkalainen and S. Syrjämäki, 'Quentin Skinner on Encountering the Past', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 6 (2002), pp. 34–63, p. 53. Cf. K. Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 71–2.

polysemy of the word and eclecticism of the tradition.¹³² Skinner's confession, however, has not inhibited his own republican crusade, which rests on a belief expounded in his Inaugural Lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge in November 1997 that 'the past is a repository of values we no longer endorse, of questions we no longer ask', and that the task of the intellectual historian is as 'a kind of archeologist, bringing buried intellectual treasure back to the surface, dusting it down and enabling us to reconsider what we think of it'.¹³³

In the last decade though, two Harvard historians have begun to challenge Skinner's interpretation the nature and character of Renaissance political thought and reverse the trend in modern historiography of talking almost exclusively about republicanism. Eric Nelson, a former student of Skinner's who has shown a tendency to challenge and revise orthodoxies, and James Hankins, who has perhaps succeeded the most in dispelling modern myths about the Renaissance, have achieved this from both within and without the literature on early-modern republicanism.

Nelson began to cast doubts on the one-dimensional and monolithic character of Renaissance political thought in modern historiography in an article on "'Talmudical Commonwealths" and the Rise of Republican Exclusivism' published in a 2007 issue of *The Historical Journal*.

Republicanism in late medieval and Renaissance Europe was always a 'relative' position. That is, it was characterized by the claim that republics are *better* than monarchies. Republicans could, of course, disagree sharply among themselves as to whether republics were always better, how much better they were, and why exactly they were better. But none had any interest in arguing that republics were the only legitimate or acceptable regimes... This commitment reflects the

¹³² D. Castiglione, 'Republicanism and its Legacy', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 4 (2005), pp. 453–65; D. Wootton, 'The True Origins of Republicanism: The Disciples of Baron and the Counter-Example of Venturi' in M. Albertone (ed.), *Il repubblicanesimo moderno. L'idea di repubblica nella riflessione storica di Franco Venturi* (Napoli, 2006), pp. 271–304.

¹³³ Q.R.D. Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, p. 112. Skinner's reference to M. Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris, 1969), is intended. For Skinner's more recent contributions to the republican story, see Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Classical Liberty and the Coming of the English Civil War' in M. van Gelderen and Q.R.D. Skinner (eds.), *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, (2 vols., Cambridge, 2005), ii, pp. 9–28; Q.R.D. Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge, 2008); M. van Gelderen and Q.R.D. Skinner (eds.), *Freedom and the Construction of Europe* (2 vols., Cambridge, 2012).

fundamental pluralism and modesty of the humanist persuasion; it follows from a deep scepticism concerning the ability of any principle to take sufficient account of all possible circumstances and situations, and from the conviction that there are always good arguments on both sides of any important question.¹³⁴

Nelson's thesis that the political theory of the Renaissance was far more inclusive than has hitherto been described was later developed into a critique of modern perceptions of Renaissance political thought. He described the overwhelming interest in republicanism in modern historiography as an 'unfortunate skewing of the literature'.

The Renaissance occupies a paradoxical place in the history of political thought. It is famous for having nurtured two diametrically opposed, although similarly extreme theoretical positions: republicanism and absolutism. Yet neither position was remotely characteristic of Renaissance political theory as a whole. The result is an understandable, but nonetheless unfortunate skewing of the literature on Renaissance political philosophy. Because republicanism and absolutism are taken to be the signal theoretical contributions of the period, and because these ideologies tend to be of most interest to contemporary scholars, they receive a disproportionate amount of attention... In contrast, the overwhelmingly dominant political ideology of the age, which might be described as princely humanism, tends to be obscured by its more celebrated, but far less ubiquitous rivals.¹³⁵

Nelson's corrective was justified by the plethora of late medieval and Renaissance mirror-for-princes – the anonymous *Oculus pastoralis* (*The Pastoral Eye*) of 1242, Giovanni da Viterbo's *De regimine principum* (*On the Government of Cities*) of 1263, Latini's *Li livres dou trésor*, Giles of Rome's (1243–1316) *De regimine principum* (*On the Rule of Princes*) of around 1277, Petrarch's *Qualis esse debeat qui rempublicam regit* (*How a Ruler Ought to Govern His State*) of 1373, Giovanni Pontano's (1426–1503) *De principe* (*On the Prince*) of 1468, Bartolomeo Sacchi's (1421–81) *De principe* (*On the Prince*) of 1471, Francesco Patrizi of Siena's (1413–94) *De regno* (*On the Kingdom*) of the late

¹³⁴ E. Nelson, "'Talmudical Commonwealths' and the Rise of Republican Exclusivism', *The Historical Journal*, 50 (2007), pp. 809–35, pp. 809–10. See also E. Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010).

¹³⁵ E. Nelson, 'The Problem of the Prince', p. 319.

1470s, Giuniano Maio's (1430–93) *De maiestate* (*On Sovereignty*) of 1492, and Machiavelli's *The Prince*.¹³⁶

In a parallel move, James Hankins first spoke of an exclusivist turn in seventeenth-century political discourse at a conference in New York in 2005 and has since been rescuing the historical meaning of republicanism ever more assiduously, especially after delivering the Carlyle Lectures in Oxford in 2010.¹³⁷ His article on 'Exclusivist Republicanism and the Non-Monarchical Republic' published in *Political Theory* in 2010 emphasised how 'the Italian Renaissance was the period when the new discursive practice arose of taking *respublica* to refer to popular or oligarchic governments – governments by a plurality of persons – and not to princely governments'. Nevertheless, 'like almost all of their classical authorities, they did not think that liberty or constitutional government was necessarily incompatible with one-man rule'.¹³⁸ For Hankins, as for Nelson, it was probably John Milton (1608–74) who first used republicanism in an exclusivist sense.¹³⁹

Hankins, who established himself as one of the foremost scholars of Renaissance intellectual history, soon echoed his colleague's thoughts about the historiography on Renaissance political thought.

After studying over many years now some hundreds of formal treatises, histories, orations, letters, dialogues, dramas, and other works written by humanists from Petrarch to Machiavelli, the present writer has concluded that current historiography places a false emphasis on the theme of republican liberty in Renaissance political thought. It is in my opinion an emphasis dictated by modern political interests and prejudices rather than one richly documented in Renaissance humanist, especially Latin, sources. Much more pervasive in these sources are themes related to what may be called "virtue politics" – on the analogy of "virtue ethics" – that is to say, a politics emphasizing the character and wisdom of the ruling class above questions of legitimacy of origins or the form of the

¹³⁶ For a useful bibliography of late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century Italian political writings, see T. Bozza, *Scrittori politici italiani dal 1550 al 1650. Saggio di bibliografia* (Rome, 1949).

¹³⁷ J. Hankins, 'Neglected Themes and Sources in Humanist Political Thought', paper delivered at the *Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America* held at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany, accessed 26 March 2015 at https://www.academia.edu/11729346/The_Italian_Humanists_on_the_State.

¹³⁸ J. Hankins, 'Exclusivist Republicanism and the Non-Monarchical Republic', *Political Theory*, 38 (2010), pp. 452–82, p. 453.

¹³⁹ E. Nelson, "'Talmudical Commonwealths'", p.823; Hankins, 'Exclusivist Republicanism', p. 454. Cf. D. Armitage *et al.* (eds.), *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1998).

regime and its laws. Its chief goal is to combat corruption, selfishness, ignorance and imprudence in rulers with a view to creating a new kind of legitimacy that can be called legitimacy of exercise.¹⁴⁰

Hankins has since turned his attention away from republicanism towards what he has termed ‘virtue politics’ in an explicit reference to the Aristotelian ‘virtue ethics’ approach to moral philosophy of the likes of Elizabeth Anscombe, Alisdair MacIntyre, and Bernard Williams.¹⁴¹

The implications of this reassessment of Renaissance political thought for the study of Aristotelian political theory in the period ought to be obvious. The *Politics*, as Hankins highlighted, offers one of the most complete and sophisticated analyses of and arguments for pluralism.¹⁴² In Book 1 of the *Politics*, Aristotle opens with a discussion of associations, the constituent elements of the household and the city, slavery, property, and the general management of the household. In Book 2, he talks about constitutions in theory (Plato’s *Republic*) and in practice (Sparta, Crete, and Carthage). In Book 3, he considers citizenship and constitutions, identifying three true and three deviant forms of government, namely kingship, aristocracy, and polity versus tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy respectively.¹⁴³ The first three are all legitimate forms – Aristotle’s first argument against exclusivism. In Book 4, he lists them in order of morally best to morally worst, that is kingship, aristocracy, polity, democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny. This moral hierarchy, which at first paints Aristotle as a propounder of absolutism, is counterbalanced by the proportional risks of each constitution. Kingship (the ideal constitution) is the most likely to degenerate and, if so, into tyranny (the worst constitution), followed by aristocracy (the second best) into oligarchy (the second worst), and ending with polity (the lesser form) into democracy (the lesser evil).¹⁴⁴ The degree of

¹⁴⁰ J. Hankins, ‘Machiavelli, Civic Humanism, and the Humanist Politics of Virtue’, *Italian Culture*, 32 (2014), pp. 98–109, pp. 99–100.

¹⁴¹ G.E.M. Anscombe, ‘Modern Moral Philosophy’, *Philosophy*, 33 (1958), pp. 1–19; A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1981); B. Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985). I should point out here that I find Hankins’ decision to refer to Anscombe’s, MacIntyre’s, and Williams’ Aristotelian ‘virtue ethics’ to be an odd move considering his critique of Skinner. Nevertheless, I find his characterisation of Renaissance political thought overall correct.

¹⁴² On Aristotle’s pluralism, see M. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge, 1986); J.D.G. Evans, ‘Cultural Realism: The Ancient Philosophical Background’ in D. Archard (ed.), *Philosophy and Pluralism* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 47–60.

¹⁴³ Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. E. Baker and R.F. Stalley (Oxford, 2009), 1279a25–b10

¹⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1289a38–b10.

perfection and feasibility levels the choice between them – Aristotle’s second argument against exclusivism. ‘The best form of political association is one where power is vested in the middle class.’¹⁴⁵ So the best constitution for Aristotle is a mixed one – Aristotle’s third argument against exclusivism.¹⁴⁶ He implicitly criticises any polarising ideology. However, ‘the attainment of the best constitution is likely to be impossible for many cities; and the good lawgiver and the true statesman must therefore have their eyes open not only to what is the absolute best, but also to what is the best in relation to actual conditions’ – Aristotle’s fourth and final argument against exclusivism.¹⁴⁷

Aside from offering one of the best-known defences of political pluralism in Western thought, Aristotle also offered in Book 5 of the *Politics* one of the most thorough and empirical analyses of the dissolution of constitutions. As William L. Newman put it in his edition of *The Politics of Aristotle* of 1887, Book 5 ‘addresses itself to the study of constitutional change with no homiletical aim, but as a scientific and historical problem’.¹⁴⁸

What are the general causes which produce changes in constitutions, and what is the number and nature of these causes? In what particular ways is each constitution liable to degenerate – i.e. what forms of constitution are most likely to change to what? In addition we must ask which policies are likely to ensure the stability of constitutions, collectively and individually, and what means may best be employed to secure each particular constitution.¹⁴⁹

The book reads almost as a separate treatise, though there are good reasons for its inclusion in the *Politics* as Stephen Everson shows in reference to Book 4. For Aristotle, ‘it is true of all those practical arts and those branches of knowledge which are complete in the sense that they cover the whole of a subject rather than dealing with it in a piecemeal fashion, that each of them has to consider the different methods appropriate to the different categories of its

¹⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1295b34–b35.

¹⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1293b22–1296b12. On the mixed constitution, see A. Lintott, ‘Aristotle and the Mixed Constitution’ in R. Brock and S. Hodkinson (eds.), *Alternatives to Athens: Varieties of Political Organization and Community in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 152–66.

¹⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1288b25–b30 and 1296b13–1297a13. On Aristotle’s relativism in the Middle Ages, see J.M. Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J., 1992).

¹⁴⁸ W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, (4 vols., Oxford, 1887), i, p. 521.

¹⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1301a20–25.

subject.¹⁵⁰ *Stasis* (civil strife) is described as a product of constitutional change, though not as a necessary condition of it.¹⁵¹ Non-violent change in constitution similarly falls within the remit of the book. ‘Revolutions are sometimes achieved by force, and sometimes by fraud. Force may either be used initially or at a later stage. Fraud, too, may be used at two different stages.’¹⁵²

Aristotle is not interested in expansion but in preservation. Constitutional change, even if peaceful is seen as something to be avoided.¹⁵³ Why though? ‘Since justice (*dikaïosunē*) as well as stability (*asphaleia*) is a watchword of the *Politics*, one might expect Aristotle to have some advice for revolutionaries’ according to David Keyt. This though is not the case.

One reason may have to do with his audience: the *Politics* is addressed to those in power, not those seeking power. Another reason may be his idea that political communities are held together by their laws, that people obey the law out of habit, and that to break this habit... is to weaken the power of law and to create anarchy... And a third reason may be his notion that constitutional change is like substantial change in the animal world: it is the death of the body politic.¹⁵⁴

The roots of civil discord are contrasting views of justice and equality, that is if each side ‘does not enjoy a share in the constitution in keeping with the conception of justice it happens to entertain’.¹⁵⁵ To understand the reasons for changes in constitutions Aristotle investigates ‘the state of mind which leads to faction, the objectives which are at stake, and the causes which give rise to political disturbance and factional disputes’.¹⁵⁶ A similar approach can be found in the *Rhetoric*.¹⁵⁷

Chapters 8 and 9 of Book 5 of the *Politics* are, in Newman’s words, ‘full of political wisdom, won from the study of the small Greek City-State, a form of society in which the

¹⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1288b10–15. See S. Everson, ‘Introduction’ in Aristotle, *The Politics and The Constitutions of Athens*, ed. S. Everson (Cambridge, 1996), p. xxxv.

¹⁵¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1301a30.

¹⁵² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1304b7–18.

¹⁵³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1307b26–30.

¹⁵⁴ D. Keyt, ‘Introduction’ in Aristotle, *Politics: Books 5 and 6*, ed. D. Keyt (Oxford, 1999), pp. xiii–xxvii, p. xiv.

¹⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1301a35–40.

¹⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1302a20–22.

¹⁵⁷ Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. H. Lawson-Tancred (London, 1991), 1368b27.

political balance was exceptionally delicate, and power easily shifted from hand to hand. The rulers were always under the eyes of the ruled, and familiarity often bred contempt.¹⁵⁸ There are then striking parallels to be made between the ancient Greek and Renaissance worlds where, in Newman's words, 'the methods of party-conflict were often of the most uncompromising kind – massacre, assassination, exile, and confiscation'.¹⁵⁹ Chapter 10 of Book 5 of the *Politics* delves into the distinction between kingship and tyranny that exercised most of Machiavelli's early-modern readers. While Chapter 11 anticipates, in Ernest Barker's view, 'the character of Machiavelli, and gives "politic" advice to a "new prince" in a realistic way', Aristotle's advice, as Barker points out, 'is fundamentally different from that of Machiavelli. He bids the new prince abjure "reason of State", and play the king – and the man'.¹⁶⁰ The book closes with a historical account of tyrannies and a criticism of Plato's defective treatment of the causes of revolution and constitutional change in the *Republic*.

On these grounds, it is surprising to find that there has been no comprehensive account of the reception of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance beyond discussions of the immediate aftermath of the recovery of Aristotle in the late Middle Ages; even more so, when one considers of the steady surge of interest in Renaissance Aristotelianism since the mid-1960s and the recent catalogues compiled by Lohr and Refini. Much seems to come down to the insular character of the history of political thought, itself the product of an old-fashioned Hegelian idea of history as chiefly the study of political narrative.¹⁶¹ The walls between intellectual history and the history of political thought have yet to dissolve and historians of political thought have yet to account for the persistence of Aristotle in Renaissance thought. Some blame, however, may be placed on the rather narrow definition of Aristotelianism assumed in contemporary historiography. The idea that Aristotelianism

¹⁵⁸ W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, p. 530.

¹⁵⁹ W.L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, p. 531. See W.S. Ferguson, 'The Fall of the Athenian Empire' in J.B. Bury *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History* (12 vols., Cambridge, 1923–54), vol. v, pp. 348–75, esp. 349. On Renaissance Italy, see J.M. Najemy, 'Introduction: Italy and the Renaissance' in J. Najemy (ed.), *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance, 1300–1550* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 1–17.

¹⁶⁰ E. Barker, *The Politics of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1946), p. 247, fn. 1.

¹⁶¹ P. Gordon, 'What Is Intellectual History? A Frankly Partisan Introduction to a Frequently Misunderstood Field' available at: <http://projects.iq.harvard.edu/harvardcolloquium/pages/what-intellectual-history> (accessed 18 May 2015).

should simply refer to a tradition and not to a complexion, that is to a body works that do not fall into the Renaissance Aristotelian commentary tradition but that are nevertheless coloured with Aristotelian tenets, has led us to ignore a large part of Aristotle's influence in Renaissance political thought.

V. CONCLUSION

The tendency of recent literature on Renaissance political thought to focus on republicanism has illuminated interesting contexts, but it has come at the expense of not only an accurate description of Renaissance political thought but a fair representation of the importance and role of Aristotle's political ideas at the time. This is not to say that the political theory of the Renaissance owed a deeper debt to Greece than to Rome. Such economical descriptions are generally unhelpful and more the province of rhetoric than history. What it does mean though, is that historians should abandon the idea of Renaissance political theory as consistently and resolutely charged ideologically. Even in narrow timeframes, contexts rapidly change in ways that dramatically alter thoughts and beliefs. Future studies could benefit from being more readily receptive to the plurality of ideologies, genres, and contexts in which Renaissance political thought arose and developed. Once historians of political thought become more aware of the distortions provided by modern concerns and prejudices, they may begin more readily to respond to recent findings in intellectual history more generally, such as the plethora of Renaissance vernacular commentaries on Aristotle's political thought. They might think more critically and fairly about interpretations of underlying concepts, such as Renaissance humanism and republicanism. And they might produce unskewed pictures of Renaissance political theory, sensitive to the different and often contrasting ways in which classical arguments were deployed in the age. Nelson and Hankins have paved the way for a reconsideration of Aristotle in Renaissance political thought. There now needs to be a concerted effort to illuminate the myriad ways in which Aristotelian tenets coloured this context, which is precisely what I intend to do, starting with the changing perception of

Aristotle's *Politics* in the *Quattrocento* evident in the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the Renaissance.

2

From Political Philosophy to Political Theory

Leonardo Bruni

I. THE PLATO-ARISTOTLE CONTROVERSY

Since history for the most part deals with the state and with the changes taking place within it, to achieve an understanding of the subject we must explain briefly the origins, developed form, and ends of principalities, especially since there is nothing more fruitful and beneficial in all history. Other things, indeed, seem very valuable for a knowledge of the nature of the soul and really admirable for shaping the morals of each man, but the things gathered from the reading of historians about the beginnings of cities, their growth, matured form, decline, and fall are so very necessary, not only to individuals but to everyone, that Aristotle thought nothing was more effective in establishing and maintaining societies of men than to be informed in the science of governing a state.¹

Jean Bodin (1530–96), *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1566).

The Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican houses one of Raphael's (1483–1520) most iconic frescoes, *The School of Athens*. The fresco depicts Plato and Aristotle strolling in the centre of a huge vaulted hall surrounded by fifty-six other famous figures, such as Zeno, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Euclid, writing, drawing, teaching, talking, reading, thinking, or simply watching.² Plato walks on Aristotle's right, his finger pointing skywards, and Aristotle walks on Plato's left, his palm stretched open over the ground (Figure 1). The painting is part of a cycle of frescoes commissioned by Pope Julius II (1443–1513) to decorate the four walls of his private library. It includes *The Disputa*, *The Parnassus*, and *The Cardinal Virtues*. Each picture

¹ Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (Paris, 1566), p. 177. All English translations are from Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, ed. B. Reynolds (New York, N.Y., 1945), p. 153.

² E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in Renaissance Art* (London, 1972), pp. 85–101.



Fig. 1. Raphael, *The School of Athens*, East wall, Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican.

represents one of the four major categories (or faculties) of the traditional library system, namely Philosophy, Law, Theology, and Poetry.

If interpretations of *The School of Athens* in the context of Raphael's cycle of frescoes have long differed widely, the internal iconography of the painting is remarkably simple.³ Plato's and Aristotle's gestures are not just visual metonyms for a verbal dialogue but straightforward representations of two distinct philosophies. Raphael is alluding, quite literally on the one hand, to Plato's *hyperuranion*, that is the world of ideas, and, on the other hand, to the role of the material world in Aristotle's philosophy.⁴ These two allusions are buttressed by three elements: the depiction of the *Timaeus* in Plato's hands and the *Ethics* in Aristotle's; the two backdrop medallions in the painted architecture of the central hall, showing on the left a man staring at the sky and on the right a woman looking downwards at a globe (Figures 3 and 4); and the overhead portrait, painted on the ceiling above the fresco, of Lady Philosophy seated on a throne and holding two books, one entitled *Naturalis* and the other *Moralis*, while flanked by two putti carrying the inscription 'CAVSARVM COGNITIO' (ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CAUSES) (Figure 5). The symmetry is intentionally striking. Raphael is couching the painting in the medieval topos that gave the speech of wisdom to Plato, and the speech of knowledge to Aristotle.⁵

This allegory of philosophy encapsulates a vision of the philosophical universe central to the Renaissance, that is the idea of a rigid dichotomy between Plato and Aristotle and their respective concerns for the cosmos and the world. First inspired by Aristotle himself with his criticism of Plato, this dichotomy found full expression in the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the Renaissance sparked by the Byzantine scholar George Gemistos Plethon (1355–1452) while

³ M.J. Hall, *Raphael's 'School of Athens'* (Cambridge, 1997); C.L. Joost-Gaugier, *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura: Meaning and Invention* (Cambridge, 2002).

⁴ On the *hyperuranion*, see Plato, *Phaedrus*, ed. R. Waterfield (Oxford, 2009), 247C. Cf. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, ed. H. Lawson-Tancred (London, 1986), 430a1; Aquinas, *Questiones disputatae de veritate* in *Opera omnia* [the Leonine edition] (Rome, 1882–), xxii, question 2, article 3, argument 19: 'nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu.'

⁵ Bonaventure, *Opuscula varia theologica* in *Opera omnia S. Bonaventurae* (9 vols., Rome, 1950–65), v, sermon 4, argument 18: 'Et ideo videtur, quod inter philosophos datus sit Platoni sermo sapientiae, Aristoteli vero sermo scientiae. Ille enim principaliter aspiciebat ad superiora, hic vero principaliter ad inferiora.'



Fig. 2. Raphael, *The School of Athens*, Plato and Aristotle holding the *Timaeus* and the *Ethics*.



Fig. 3 and 4. Raphael, *The School of Athens*, backrop medallions.



Fig. 5. Raphael, *The School of Athens*, East corner ceiling medallion.

on visit to the Council of Ferrara-Florence of 1438–45.⁶ Plethon triggered the debate when he sought to highlight the greater alignment of Christian theology with Plato rather than with Aristotle in the private lectures he delivered before Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini (1398–1444), published as *De differentiis Platonis et Aristotelis* (*On the Differences between Plato and Aristotle*) of 1439.⁷ The controversy was then notably taken up by two other famous Byzantine émigrés, namely the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople Cardinal Basilios Bessarion (1403–72) and the Cretan scholar George of Trebizond (1395–1472).⁸ It raged until the end of the sixteenth century with the philosopher Jacopo Mazzoni's (1548–98) *Comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* (*A Comparison between Plato and Aristotle*) of 1597.⁹

Early signs of the dichotomy can be found in one of the most famous invectives of Renaissance literature, Petrarch's (1304–74) *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* (*On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others*) of 1367. Petrarch's letter was an attack against four Averroist critics who had made disparaging remarks about his scholarship.¹⁰ The invective is markedly anti-Aristotelian. Petrarch inveighs against both his critics' blind allegiance to Aristotle – 'let them keep their prodigious opinion of themselves and the bare name of Aristotle, whose five

⁶ On Aristotle versus Plato, see H.F. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore, Md., 1944). On the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the Renaissance in general, see J. Monfasani, 'Marsilio Ficino and the Plato-Aristotle Controversy' in M.J.B. Allen and V. Rees (eds.), *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 179–202; J. Monfasani, 'A Tale of Two Books: Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis* and George of Trebizond's *Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis*', *Renaissance Studies*, 22 (2008), pp. 1–15; J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., Leiden, 1990), i, pp. 193–263.

⁷ On Plethon, see C.M. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes* (Oxford, 1986); G. Karamanolis, 'Plethon and Scholarios on Aristotle' in K. Ierodiakonou, *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 253–282. The text generally used by scholars for the *De differentiis* is B. Lagarde, 'Le *De differentiis* de Pléthon d'après l'autographe de la Marcienne', *Byzantion*, 43 (1973), pp. 312–43. For an English translation, see C.M. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon*, pp. 192–214.

⁸ On Bessarion, see Basilios Bessarion, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist, und Staatsmann*, ed. L. Mohler (3 vols., Paderborn, 1923–42), i. On Trebizond, see J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of His Rhetoric and Logic* (Leiden, 1976). I should also like to draw attention to the forthcoming book by J. Monfasani, *Georgii Trapezuntii Comparatio Philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis atque Protectio Aristotelis Problematum* [not seen].

⁹ On Jacopo Mazzoni and the *comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* tradition, see F. Purnell Jr., 'Jacopo Mazzoni and His Comparison of Plato and Aristotle' (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1971).

¹⁰ On Petrarch's critics and their averroism, see P.O. Kristeller, 'Petrarch's "Averroists": A Note on the History of Aristotelianism in Venice, Padua, and Bologna', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 14 (1952), pp. 59–65 reprinted in P.O. Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (4 vols., Rome, 1984–96), ii, pp. 209–16. On Petrarch more generally, see N. Mann, *Petrarch* (Oxford, 1984).

syllables delight the ignorant'¹¹ – and the Stagirite himself – ‘a great man and a polymath’ but who ‘was still human and could therefore have been ignorant of some things, or even of many things’,¹² in other words a man ‘whose splendor’ ironically ‘has so blinded many people’s feeble and bleary eyes that they have fallen into the pits of error’. One quickly gets to the crux of the problem. Aristotle, Petrarch writes, ‘subtly discussed many topics’ but ‘failed to see this one great truth, which many unlearned people have seen and continue to see’, that is the greatness of God.¹³ Hence Petrarch’s advice: ‘we should particularly avoid Aristotle, not because he committed more errors, but because he has more authority and more followers’.¹⁴

Aristotle himself I know to be a great man, but a human one; and I wouldn’t say this if I didn’t know his greatness. I know that one can learn many things from his books, but I also know that one can learn many things elsewhere too. Before Aristotle wrote, studied, or was even born, I have no doubt that others knew many things: Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Diogenes, Solon, Socrates, and the prince of philosophy, Plato.¹⁵

Petrarch relentlessly ridicules his critics by casting doubts over their hero Averroes. ‘If Averroes prefers Aristotle to all others,’ he writes, ‘the reason is that he undertook to comment on his works and in a way made them his own. These works deserve great praise, but the man who praises them is suspect. It all comes down to the old adage: “Every merchant praises his own merchandise”’.¹⁶

Plato and Aristotle’s divorce takes place in the second half of *De sui ipsius ignorantia*. ‘I have not forgotten,’ Petrarch writes, ‘that great controversy often arises between scholars when they judge men of learning, such as Cicero and Demosthenes, Cicero and Virgil, Virgil and Homer, Sallust and Thucydides, Plato and his fellow student Xenophon, and many

¹¹ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others* in Petrarch, *Invectives*, ed. D. Marsh (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), pp. 222–363, p. 247.

¹² Ibid., p. 265.

¹³ Ibid., p. 271.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 311.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 321. Note that while Petrarch was in possession of a manuscript containing thirteen dialogues of Plato (eight genuine and five spurious), he was, nevertheless, unable to read them. On the recovery of classical texts in the Renaissance, see A. Grafton, ‘The Availability of Ancient Works’ in C.B. Schmitt *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 767–91; J. Hankins and A. Palmer, *The Recovery of Ancient Philosophy in the Renaissance: A Brief Guide* (Florence, 2007).

¹⁶ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance*, p. 323.

others'. 'If investigating and evaluating these cases is difficult and doubtful,' he continues, 'who may sit and pronounce between Plato and Aristotle with judicial authority?' The question is rhetorical. The answer is no one. 'But suppose we ask, "Who has been more praised?"' Petrarch answers tongue in cheek, ostensibly levelling the two but in fact setting them apart by creating ties with the Augustinian commonplace of siding with Plato in view of his vicinity to Christian truth.¹⁷ The irony and wit of Petrarch's answer is palpable. The subtext is clear. The wise few praise Plato while the ignorant masses prefer Aristotle. Aristotle's criticism of Plato is motivated less by genius than by envy.

Efforts to quash the Plato-Aristotle controversy poured in the wake of Plethon's *De differentiis*. The eclectic Aristotelian and anti-Medicean Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), who was bitterly ironised by the scholar and book-hunter Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), aligned Aristotle with Plato in his *De morali disciplina* (*On Moral Doctrine*) begun in 1473.¹⁸ 'If,' Filelfo wrote, 'on the surface it seems that Aristotle disagrees with his teacher Plato in many places, in reality he strongly agrees with him on everything'.¹⁹ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola echoed

¹⁷ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance*, pp. 325–7. On Augustine's discussion of Plato, see Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, ed. A. Mutzenbecher (Turnhout, 1975), 83.46.2; Cicero, *Academica*, ed. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), 1.9. On Petrarch and Augustine, see U. Mariani, *Il Petrarca e gli Agostiniani* (Rome, 1959); W.J. Bouwsma, 'The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought' in H.A. Oberman and T.A. Brady, Jr (eds.), *Itinerarium Italicum: The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of Its European Transformations* (Leiden, 1975), pp. 3–60 reprinted in W.J. Bouwsma, *A Usable Past: Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley, Cal., 1990), pp. 19–73; P.P. Gerosa, *Umanesimo cristiano del Petrarca: Influenza agostiniana, attinenze medievali* (Turin, 1966); C.E. Quillen, 'A Tradition Invented: Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53 (1992), pp. 179–207; A. Lee, *Petrarch and St. Augustine: Classical Scholarship, Christian Theology and the Origins of the Renaissance in Italy* (Leiden, 2012).

¹⁸ On Filelfo, see C. Rosmini, *Vita di Francesco Filelfo da Tolentino* (3 vols., Milan, 1808); D. Robin, 'A Reassessment of the Character of Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481)', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 36 (1983), pp. 202–24. On the practice of referring to Filelfo as an Aristotelian, see Filelfo's letter to George Scholarios 'François Filelfe à George Scholarios: Bologne, 29 mars 1439' in E. Legrand, *Cent-dix lettres grecques de François Filelfe publiées intégralement pour la première fois d'après le codex Trivulzianus 873* (Paris, 1892), pp. 31–4 (12); V. Rossi, *Il Quattrocento*, ed. A. Vallone (Milan, 1933), p. 130; E. Garin, *Filosofi Italiani del Quattrocento* (Rome, 2012), p. 130; P.O. Kristeller, 'Un codice padovano di Aristotele postillato da Francesco ed Ermolao Barbaro: il manoscritto Plimpton 17 della Columbia University Library', *Bibliofilia*, 50 (1948), pp. 162–78 reprinted in *Studies*, i, pp. 337–53, p. 339, fn. 7; J.A. Kraye, 'Francesco Filelfo's Lost Letter *De Ideis*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 41 (1979), pp. 236–49, p. 236. On Filelfo as a Stoic, see R.G. Adam, 'Francesco Filelfo at the Court of Milan (1439–1481): A Contribution to the Study of Humanism in Northern Italy' (2 vols., D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1974), i, p. 76. Cf. J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, i, p. 91. On Bracciolini's attack on Filelfo, see Bracciolini, *In Philelphum invectiva I–III* in *Opera omnia*, ed. R. Fubini (4 vols., Turin, 1964–9), i, pp. 164–87. On Poggio, see W. Shepherd, *The Life of Poggio Bracciolini*, 2nd edition (Liverpool, 1837).

¹⁹ Francesco Filelfo, *De morali disciplina* (Venice, 1522), p. 13: 'Verbo sane a Platone magistro Aristoteles pluribus in locis videtur dissentire, cum re ipsa maxime omnium cum illo conveniat.'

Filelfo's thoughts in a letter to the notable philologist and friend Angelo Poliziano (1454–94) printed as the proemium to Pico's *De ente et uno* (*On Being and One*) of 1491, the first instalment of a more substantial albeit unfinished treatise tentatively entitled *Platonis Aristotelisque concordia* (*On the Harmony between Plato and Aristotle*). 'Those who hold the view that Plato and Aristotle disagree with one another similarly disagree with me, since I believe in their harmony'.²⁰ Bessarion himself had conceded in a letter to his friend the Rector of the University of Paris Guillaume Fichet (1433–1480) of 1470 in somewhat Petrarchan fashion that 'a very sound and consistent philosopher should cherish one and the other and reject neither'.²¹ However, the controversy proliferated, permeating several dimensions of early-modern thought. It resonated loudest in the theological sphere, but it resounded just as long in the political one.

In the realm of political ideas the Plato-Aristotle controversy manifested itself most clearly in the myriad criticisms levelled against Plato's utopianism and theory of communality, that is the sharing of wives, children, and property in the *Republic's* *Kallipolis*.²² Louis Le Roy (1510–77), Professor of Greek at the Collège Royale (later known as the Collège de France), best known for his *De la vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers* (*Of the Vicissitude or Variety of Things in the Universe*) of 1576, offers a list of early critics of Plato's theory of communality in his French translation of *Les Politiques d'Aristote* (*The Politics of Aristotle*) of 1568.²³ George of

²⁰ Giovanni Pico, *De ente et uno* in *Opere*, ed. E. Garin (Turin, 2004), p. 386: 'Et quoniam qui Aristotelem dissentire a Platone existimant, a me ipsi dissentiunt, qui concordem utriusque facio philosophiam'. See also M. Bertozzi, 'Prefazione' and R. Ebgi, 'Introduzione' in Giovanni Pico, *Dell'Ente e dell'Uno*, ed. R. Ebgi (Milan, 2011), pp. 7–39 and pp. 43–157.

²¹ Bessarion, *Epistolae* in *Kardinal Bessarion*, iii, letter 71, p. 555: 'Librum edidimus, in quo illud potissimum nobis propositum est efficere, ut Plato, ad hunc diem latinis hominibus ignotus, nostra opera suarum opinionum capita exponat, ne aut ipse alia docuisse, quam Aristoteles probavit, aut hic Platone discessisse videatur, ut eum contempserit, quo praeceptore diutissime usus est. Gravem sane et constantem philosophum decet utrumque amplecti, aspernari neutrum.'

²² Plato, *Republic*, ed. R. Waterfield (Oxford, 1993), 449A–451B, 614A–621D. Cf. Plato, *The Laws*, ed. T. Saunders (London, 2005), 754A–759A. On Plato's theory of communality, see P. Garnsey, *Thinking about Property: From Antiquity to the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 6–30. I should point out that I reject the term 'communism' because of its modern connotations.

²³ Louis Le Roy, *Les Politiques d'Aristote* (Paris, 1576), p. 69. Le Roy mentions both Christian and Pagan texts, such as Eusebius, *Preparationis evangelicae* in *Opera*, ed. W. Dindorf (4 vols., Leipzig, 1867–90), ii, 13.19 and Polybius, *The Histories*, ed. W.R. Paton *et al.*, (6 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1922), iii, 6.47.7–10: 'Nor again is it fair to introduce Plato's republic which also is much belauded by some philosophers. And just as we do not admit to contest artists and athletes who are not registered or trained, so we have no right to admit this constitution to the competition for the prize of merit, unless it first give an exhibition of its actual working. As to the present it would be just the same thing to discuss it with a view to comparison with the constitutions of Sparta, Rome, and Carthage, as to take the statue and

Trebizond lamented Plato's views on marriage in his *Comparatio Phylosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* (*A Comparison between the Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*) of 1458. 'Why should Plato be a philosopher in my eyes, he who put the greatest effort into quenching the nature of men in two ways, for he first prostituted women and abolished marriage lest we recognise our children, and then, so that we may be enslaved to lust alone, advised us to plough manure but indeed devised both crimes for the sake of sensuous pleasure?'²⁴ The German theologian Henricus Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535) echoed George's criticism, albeit not in such uncouth terms, in the chapter *De Lenonia* (*On Pandarism*) of his *De incretitudine et vanitate scientiarum* (*On the Vanity and Uncertainty of the Arts and Sciences*) of 1530.²⁵ The French emblemist Guillaume de la Perrière (1499–1565) expressed those thoughts too in his *Le miroir politique* (*The Mirror of Politics*) of 1555, extending his criticism to the Nicolaites and Sir Thomas More (1478–1535).²⁶ The Oxford Aristotelian philosopher John Case (1546–1600) wrote about Plato's theory along similar lines in his *Sphaera civitatis* (*On the Sphere of the City*) of 1588.

Learned Plato, this opinion of yours is strange and unheard-of, to be attested by no sovereign's edict, to be subscribed to by no philosopher's signature. Justice shrinks when you teach that fortunes should be owned in common, nature shrinks when you say that about wives, about children. For we have defined commonwealths as homes for the virtues, not as brothels for whores. This doctrine of yours is pleasant but dangerous, attractive but full of woes; perhaps it is desired by many, but it is pernicious to its addicts. For it opens a window for every licence of morals, to every confusion of things, to the sedition of citizens, to the ruin and shipwreck of everything. ²⁷

compare it with living.' On the reception of Plato's theory of communality in the Renaissance, see P. Garnsey, *Thinking about Property*, pp. 31–58.

²⁴ George of Trebizond, *Comparatio phylosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* (Venice, 1523), N7r–O1v: 'Quare si perfectio humana est (de hoc seculo loquor) cognoscere te in his, quae genuisti antequam moriaris, ac illos pro te huic vitae relinquere, cur Plato mihi philosophus erit, qui naturae vires duabus extinguere rationibus summopere conatus est, nam primum ne liberos videamus mulieres prostituit, et matrimonia tollit, deinde ut libidini soli serviamus arare stercora consulit, immo autem voluptatis venereae causa, utrumque scelus excogitavit.'

²⁵ Henricus Cornelius Agrippa, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum declamatio inveciva* (Antwerp, 1530), N3v–O2v. On Agrippa, see M. van der Poel, *Cornelius Agrippa, the Humanist Theologian and His Declamations* (Leiden, 1997).

²⁶ Guillaume de la Perrière, *Le miroir politique* (Lyon, 1555), pp. 93–7. On De la Perrière, see G. Cazals, *Une civile société. La République selon Guillaume de la Perrière (1499–1554)* (Toulouse, 2008); G. Cazals, *Guillaume de la Perrière (1499–1554), des emblèmes au Miroir Politique* (Geneva, forthcoming) [not seen].

²⁷ John Case, *Sphaera civitatis* (Oxford, 1589), p. 52: 'Nova et inaudita est haec tua opinio (erudite Plato,) nullius principis diplomate obsignanda, nullius philosophi chirographo subscribenda. Abhorret iustitia cum fortunas, abhorret natura cum uxores, cum liberos communes esse debere doces. Civitates enim domicilia virtutis, non lupanaria meretricum esse definivimus. Dulcis est haec doctrina tua sed

Of course, in the Renaissance, not all discussions of Plato's theory of communality were critical of it. Valla, for example, perhaps ironically applauded Plato's political thought in his *De voluptate* (*On Pleasure*) of 1431. 'If one were free to live the Platonic way,' he wrote, 'those delightful women would not belong to some individual... but to the republic, that is its people'. Accordingly, 'there would be one city, one republic, one marriage and almost one house and one family... If only we could submit to Plato's laws rather than the Julian laws.'²⁸ Bessarion sought to ascribe the same theory of communality in Plato to Aristotle in his *In calumniatorem Platonis* (*Against the Calumniators of Plato*) of 1469.²⁹ Renaissance Platonic political thought, furthermore, was not merely utopian in character. Plato's political ideas were employed by the Visconti's protégé Uberto Decembrio (*d.* 1427) to justify the rule of the Milanese elites in his prologue to the first translation of the *Republic* of 1402 and then, more fully, in his own dialogues *De republica libri IV* of around 1420.³⁰ The humanist Bartolomeo

periculosa, pulchra sed miseriis plena, optata fortasse multis, sed sui cultoribus perniciosa. Fenestram enim aperit ad omnem licentiam morum, ad omnem confusionem rerum, ad seditionem civium, ad ruinam et naufragium omnium.' All English translations are from Dana Sutton at <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/sphaera/> (accessed on 23 April 2015). On Case, see C.B. Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (Montreal, 1983).

²⁸ Lorenzo Valla, *De voluptate ac vero bono* in *Opera omnia*, ed. E. Garin (Basil, 1540 reprinted in Turin, 1962), pp. 896–999, p. 922 (1.39): 'Quamquam si liberet ad formulam Platoniam vivere, essent ille lepidae mulieres non quorundam privatorum, prope dixerim tyrannorum, sed reipublicae id est ipsius populi, passimque liceret et nos illarum, et illas nostra benevolentia frui, ita esset una civitas, una respublica, unum matrimonium, et quasi una domus atque una familia. Quis enim mihi irasci vellet, quo in complexu me sue aut sororis, aut filiae deprehenderet, cum sciret illam meam, totiusque populi coniugem fore? Tametsi nemo ut uxorem ita nec sororem nec filiam asserere suam posset. Nemo inquam mihi irascere sororem suam aut filiam etiam virginem amplexanti, cum sibi idem iuris in alias daret, et acquissimum sit primitias virginitatis esse, qui primum et maxime benevolentiam virginis sibi conciliavit, et hoc ab illa volente munus impetravit. Utinam utinam [*sic*] huic Platonis legi obtemperare quam Iuliae malleamus.'

²⁹ Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis libri IV* in *Kardinal Bessarion*, ii, pp. 509–11: 'Neque enim unum ratione quantitatis accepit Plato, quod destructio civitatis esset, sed qualitatis, ut unum sit concordia, consensum, unanimitate, denique virtutis unitate, quod unum civitatem egregie non modo constituit, sed etiam conservat et augeat. Quapropter Aristoteles quoque hominem civile ac sociale animal vocat. Civilia vero animalia primo libro de *Historia Animalium* ea esse dicit, "quorum negotium unum communeque omnium est, idque non omnibus animantibus, quae gregem constituunt, accidere, sed aliquibus, ut sunt homo, apes, vespa, formica, grus".' On George's response to Bessarion's *In calumniatorem*, see J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, pp. 222–3.

³⁰ Uberto Decembrio, *Prologi in Platonis libros De re publica* in J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, ii, pp. 525–7, p. 526: 'Ut ad Platonem autem de quo nunc agitur redeamus, talem ac tantam tantoque ordine rempublicam stabilisse prima fronte nulla alia ratione considero quam quod aristocraticam Atheniensem felicioribus forte maiorum auspiciis atque legibus conditam politiam ad timocraticam, deinde ad oligarchicam et subinde, crescente in dies malitia, ad democraticam et forte ipsius ad tyrannidem temporibus viderat pervenisse.'

Platina (1421–81) did the same for the Medici in his *De optimo cive* (*On the Best Citizen*) of 1470.³¹ Bessarions' beliefs, again related in his *In calumniatorem Platonis*, are emblematic. It is impossible for 'men, who of their own will neither elect nor act upon their better judgment nor submit to that of others, to depart from depravity other than by force and some necessity'. In his eyes, virtue is 'something that can be brought about far better and more easily by a single ruler than by many, for it easier to reform one ruler than many'.³² Plato, Bessarion continues, 'would give him [the ruler] some outstanding man as his teacher, who would then educate and instruct him in good customs and letters and turn him into a worthy ruler, who... will bring true happiness to citizens.'³³

Criticism of Plato in the Renaissance continued to flourish, however, and to provide the quiet backdrop to much contemporary political literature. It is my intention in this chapter to discuss the origins of this controversy and to use it as a lens through which to reassess the importance of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance. Studies of medieval and early-modern political thought have long emphasised the impact of the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy in the Latin West. From Otto von Gierke's *Die publicistischen Lehren des Mittelalters* of 1881 to Joseph Canning's *A History of Medieval Political Thought* of 1996 and beyond, the consensus among medievalists has always been that 'the resuscitation of the Political Philosophy of the Antique World, and above all the exaltation of the Politics of Aristotle to the position of an irrefragable canon, had from the first dictated at least the scientific form of the whole doctrine' of society.³⁴ For J.G.A. Pocock, it produced 'a body of

³¹ A. Brown, 'Platonism in Fifteenth-Century Florence and Its Contribution to Early Modern Political Thought', *The Journal of Modern History*, 58 (1986), pp. 383–413, p. 408. On Platina's *De optimo cive* and *De principe* see N. Rubinstein, 'The *De optimo cive* and the *De principe* by Bartolomeo Platina' in R. Cardini et al. (eds.), *Tradizione classica e letteratura umanistica. Per Alessandro Perosa* (2 vols., Rome, 1985), i, pp. 375–89 reprinted in N. Rubinstein, *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. G. Ciappelli (3 vols., Rome, 2004–12), i, pp. 259–71.

³² Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis*, ii, p. 587: 'Neque enim fieri potest, ut homines, qui vel suo consilio non eligunt aguntque, quae meliora sunt, vel recte consulentibus non parent, aliter quam vi et summa quadam necessitate a pravis moribus discedere possint, quam melius longeque facilius unus princeps quam plures potest inferre... Facilius enim unus quam plures emendari potest.'

³³ Ibid., ii, p. 587: 'Etiam praeceptorem ei adhibet summum aliquem virum, qui eum erudiat atque instruat bonis moribus et litteris et dignum reddat regem, quem veram felicitatem allaturum civitatibus pollicetur.'

³⁴ O. von Gierke, 'Die publicistischen Lehren des Mittelalters' in O. von Gierke, *Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht* (4 vols., Berlin, 1868–1913), iii. All English translations are from O. von Gierke,

thought about the citizen and his relation to the republic and about the republic (or polis) as a community of values' essential 'to humanists and Italian thinkers in search of means of vindicating the universality and stability of the *vivere civile*'.³⁵ For Quentin Skinner, it led to the 're-emergence of the idea that political philosophy constitutes an independent discipline worthy of study in its own right'.³⁶ For Nicolai Rubinstein, it coined the word politics.³⁷ For Maurizio Viroli, it 'cooperated in the work of reconstructing the language of politics'.³⁸

I would like to abstract briefly from discussions of Aristotle's immediate impact on the political thought of the Middle Ages and contribution to the foundations of modern political thought. Of course, the recovery of Aristotle's political thought can be seen as a turning point in the history of political ideas (though to what extent remains a vexed question). Historians of political thought, whether by their methods or concerns, have generally been oblivious to later aspects of the reception of Aristotelian political ideas in the Renaissance. Studies, such as J.W. Allen's *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* of 1928 and Pierre Mesnard's *L'essor de la philosophie politique au xvi^e siècle* of 1936, have concentrated so exclusively and textually on the great books of early-modern political thought that they have shown scant regard for the intellectual context and traditions out of which these arose.³⁹ Histories, instead, such as Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment* of 1975 and Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* of 1978, have focused so narrowly on republicanism that they have shown little interest in Aristotle beyond his contribution to the concepts of active citizenship and self-government. Anthologies, such as *The Cambridge History of Political Thought*, have shared a habit

Political Theories of the Middle Ages, ed. F.W. Maitland (London, 1900), p. 2. See also R.W. and A.J. Carlyle, *A History of Mediaeval Political Thought in the West* (6 vols., Edinburgh, 1903–36); E.H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J., 1957); W. Ullmann, *A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1965); W. Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London, 1966); J.H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1987); A. Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250–1450* (Cambridge, 1992); J.P. Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought, 300–1450* (London, 1996).

³⁵ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 66–7.

³⁶ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1978), ii, p. 348.

³⁷ N. Rubinstein, 'The History of the Word *Politikus* in Early-Modern Europe' in A. Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 41–56.

³⁸ M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250–1600* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 11.

³⁹ J.W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1928); P. Mesnard, *L'essor de la philosophie politique au xvi^e siècle* (Paris, 1951).

of mentioning Renaissance Aristotelian authors only in passing.⁴⁰ Surveys, like Rodolfo de Mattei's *Il pensiero politico italiano nell'età della Controriforma* of 1982, have treated the subject somewhat naively.⁴¹

My intention here is to offer a useful background to later chapters and discuss Aristotle in the context of the changing nature and character of Renaissance political thought by looking at, first, the changing character of ethics in the Renaissance, and then, the revival of Greek studies in the Renaissance, and, finally, by focusing on Leonardo Bruni's (1369–1444) perception of Aristotle. There is a long-standing debate in modern political thought on what political philosophy or theory ought to be, that is the extent to which it should be either rational or empirical, deal with the universal or the particular, respond to necessity or contingency, and be grounded in hypotheses or history.⁴² A distinction may in fact be drawn between political philosophy and political theory, that is between, for instance, John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* of 1971 and Michael Walzer's *Spheres of Justice* of 1983 or what is studied in philosophy departments and what is studied in social sciences faculties.⁴³ The two disciplines are, of course, related. But the former focuses on what ought to be while the latter concentrates on what can be. The former enjoys a higher level of abstraction while the latter enjoys a higher level of empiricism. There was, to be sure, no debate of this kind in the fifteenth century. There were, however, the first glimmerings of a change in Renaissance political thought epitomised by Machiavelli that manifested themselves most clearly in a renewed interest and different attitude towards Aristotle's *Politics*, from looking at it purely as a work of political philosophy to doing so as a work of political theory. This change implies a shift in the nature, character, and end of political thought, from constructing the ideal to

⁴⁰ N. Rubinstein, 'Italian Political Thought, 1450–1530' in J.H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1400–1650* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 30–65; G. Burgess *et al.* (eds.), *European Political Thought 1450–1700: Religion, Law and Philosophy* (New Haven, Conn., 2007), p. 56.

⁴¹ R. de Mattei, *Il pensiero politico italiano nell'età della Controriforma* (2 vols., Naples, 1982–4); C. Curcio, *Dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma: contributo alla storia del pensiero politico italiano da Guicciardini a Botero* (Rome, 1934); L. Firpo, *Il pensiero politico del Rinascimento e della Controriforma* (Milan, 1966); G.M. Barbuto, *Il pensiero politico del Rinascimento: realismo e utopia* (Rome, 2008); R. Fubini, *Politica e pensiero politico nell'Italia del Rinascimento: dallo stato territoriale al Machiavelli* (Florence, 2009).

⁴² J. Floyd and M. Stears (eds.), *Political Philosophy versus History? Contextualism and Real Politics in Contemporary Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2011).

⁴³ J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1971); M.J. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York, N.Y., 1983).

responding to what was real. My contention is that these glimmerings go back to before Machiavelli and were the product of not just a more serious involvement of humanists in contemporary politics but also to the changing character of ethics in the Renaissance, the revival Greek studies in the West, and can be found in one of the earliest *comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* (comparison between Plato and Aristotle).⁴⁴

II. THE MARRIAGE OF WISDOM AND ELOQUENCE

For Aristotle, ‘all knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good’ and ‘the highest of all goods achievable by action... is happiness’,⁴⁵ which he describes as ‘virtuous activity’.⁴⁶ Virtue is of two kinds, intellectual and moral, and ‘moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name ethics,’ from the word *ethos* (habit). For Aristotle, ‘none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature.’⁴⁷ His enquiry into ethics ‘does not aim at theoretical knowledge’ but practical reform. In his own words, ‘we are inquiring not in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good, since otherwise our inquiry would have been of no use.’⁴⁸ Scholastic ethics poorly reflected the practical mission of Aristotelian ethics, preferring to erect abstract non-contradictory theories of virtue rather than teach man how to live well.⁴⁹ With the advent of humanism, that is the revival of the *studia humanitatis*, the cycle of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy, a change took place in the Renaissance thought from talking about ethics pedagogically to doing so perlocutionarily, that is with the

⁴⁴ I should point that, of course, I think that the changing character of ethics in the Renaissance is related to the growing involvement of humanists in contemporary politics. However, my intention here is to underline the intellectual background of the shift in attitude towards Aristotle. For the social and political context, which is largely Florentine, I defer chiefly to L. Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists, 1390–1460* (Princeton, NJ., 1963); R.G. Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2012); B.J. Maxson, *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, 2013).

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. D. Ross and L. Brown (Oxford, 2009), 1095a15–20.

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098b30.

⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a15–20.

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103b25–30.

⁴⁹ On scholastic ethics, see G. Wieland, ‘The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle’s *Ethics*’ and ‘Happiness: The Perfection of Man’ in A. Kenny *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 657–72 and pp. 673–86 respectively.

intention of enticing man to be good.⁵⁰ The change reflected a shift in subject matter, from dealing with universals and necessity to particulars and contingency. The emergence of *fortuna* (fortune) as a topos in Renaissance literature is an expression of it.⁵¹

The changing character of ethics from a purely speculative discipline to an essentially practical science in the Renaissance was brought about by Petrarch most clearly in his *De sui ipsius ignorantia* when he celebrated the marriage of rhetoric and philosophy found, for example, in Cicero's *De oratore* (*On the Orator*). Written as a dialogue not in the Platonic sense of an enquiry into truths yet to be ascertained but in the Aristotelian sense of dialogue and discussion where truths are already known and expounded, Cicero's *De oratore* was a response to his brother Quintus' desire to know the function of the orator.⁵² In it Cicero outlines an image of the orator as a moral guide to the state.

It is the part of the orator, when advising of affairs of supreme importance, to unfold his opinion as a man having authority: his duty too it is to arouse a listless nation, and to curb its unbridled impetuosity. By one and the same power of eloquence the deceitful among mankind are brought to destruction, and the righteous to deliverance. Who more passionately than the orator can encourage to virtuous conduct, or more zealously than he reclaim from vicious courses? Who can more austere censure the wicked, or more gracefully praise men of worth? Whose invective can

⁵⁰ On the differences between scholastic and humanist ethics, see P.O. Kristeller, 'The Humanist Movement' in Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic and Humanist Strains* (London, 1961), pp. 3–23; P.O. Kristeller, 'The Moral Thought of Renaissance Humanism' in P.O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought II: Papers on Humanism and the Arts* (London, 1965), pp. 20–68; E. Kessler, *Petrarca und die Geschichte: Geschichtsschreibung, Rhetorik, Philosophie im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Munich, 1978); E. Kessler, 'Humanist Thought: A Response to Scholastic Philosophy', *Res Publica Litterarum: Studies in the Classical Tradition*, 2 (1979), pp. 149–66. *Perlocutionarily* is a neologism that I use to refer to the practice of performing speech acts designed to persuade or convince, see J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1976). The noun *perlocution* and adjective *perlocutionary* are now well-established in the history of political thought literature, so I feel there should be a corresponding adverb.

⁵¹ E. Kessler, 'The Method of Moral Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism' in D. Lines and S. Ebbersmeyer (eds.), *Rethinking Virtue, Reforming Society: New Directions in Renaissance Ethics, c. 1350–c. 1650* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 107–30. On *fortuna* from its birth to Petrarch, see D. Robinson, 'The Wheel of Fortune', *Classical Philology*, 41 (1946), pp. 207–16. On *fortuna* in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see A. Doren, 'Fortuna im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance' in F. Saxl (ed.), *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* (9 vols., Leipzig, 1923–32), ii, pp. 71–144.

⁵² Cicero, *Ad familiares*, ed. W.G. Williams (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), 1.9.23: 'Scripsi igitur Aristoteleo more, quemadmodum quidem volui, tres libros in disputatione ac dialogo *De oratore*, quos arbitror Lentulo tuo fore non inutiles. Abhorrent enim a communibus praeceptis, atque omnem antiquorum et Aristoteleam et Isocratem rationem oratoriam complectuntur.'

more forcibly subdue the power of lawless desire? Whose comfortable words can soothe grief more tenderly?⁵³

Knowledge for Cicero is intrinsic to oratory. ‘If you would narrow the idea of oratory to nothing but the speaking in ordered fashion, gracefully and copiously, how,’ Cicero asks, ‘could your orator attain even so much, if he were to lack that knowledge whereof you people deny him the possession?’⁵⁴ Eloquence then, for Cicero, may not be a necessary condition of knowledge but knowledge is a necessary condition of oratory and the two, according to him, have often been brought together in the past.⁵⁵ ‘Democritus spoke with elegance’ about natural philosophy, ‘Plato spoke with the voice of a god of things very far away from political debate’, and Aristotle was ‘eloquent and displayed charm of style and literary form’.⁵⁶

Though most likely confined to Aristotle’s lost exoteric writings, Cicero’s views on Aristotle’s eloquence were mistakenly extended in the period to the entirety of the Aristotelian corpus. The German scholar Franz Burchard’s (1503–60) well-known fictive *Responsio ad Picum Mirandulam* (*Reply to Pico della Mirandola*) of 1558 written on behalf of Ermolao Barbaro and published in a later edition of Philipp Melanchthon’s (1497–1560) *Elementorum rhetorices libri duo* (*Elements of Rhetoric in Two Books*) of 1531 is emblematic. ‘There is no use for wisdom unless we

⁵³ Cicero, *De oratore*, ed. E.W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), 2.9.35: ‘Huius est in dando consilio de maximis rebus cum dignitate explicata sententia; eiusdem et languentis populi incitatio, et effrenati moderatio. Eadem facultate et fraus hominum ad perniciem, et integritas ad salutem vocatur. Quis cohortari ad virtutem ardentius, quis a vitiis acrius revocare? Quis vituperare improbos asperius, quis laudare bonos ornatus? Quis cupiditatem vehementius frangere accusando potest? Quis maerorem levare mitius consolando?’ This portrait is first given by Crassus in Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.7.31–2: ‘Quid enim est aut tam admirabile, quam ex infinita multitudine hominum exsistere unum, qui id, quod omnibus natura sit datum, vel solus, vel cum paucis facere possit? ... Aut tam potens, tamque magnificum, quam populi motus, iudicum religiones, Senatus gravitatem, unius oratione converti? Quid tam porro regium, tam liberale, tam munificum, quam opem ferre supplicibus, excitare afflictos, dare salutem, liberare periculis, retinere homines in civitate? Quid autem tam necessarium, quam tenere semper arma, quibus vel tectus ipse esse possis, vel provocare improbos, vel te ulcisci lacessitus?’

⁵⁴ Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.11.48: ‘Qui autem haec cognoverit, sine quibus ne illa quidem minima in causis quisquam recte tueri potest, quid huic abesse poterit de maximarum rerum scientia? Sin oratoris nihil vis esse, nisi composite, ornate, copiose eloqui: quaero, id ipsum qui possit assequi sine ea scientia, quam ei non conceditis?’

⁵⁵ Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.11.48: ‘Dicendi enim virtus, nisi ei, qui dicit, ea, de quibus dicit, percepta sint, exstare non potest.’

⁵⁶ Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.11.49: ‘Quam ob rem, si ornate locutus est, sicut fertur, et mihi videtur, physicus ille Democritus: materies illa fuit physici, de qua dixit; ornatus vero ipse verborum, oratoris putandus est. Et, si Plato de rebus a civilibus controversiis remotissimis divinitus est locutus, quod ego concedo; si item Aristoteles, si Theophrastus, si Carneades in rebus eis, de quibus disputaverunt, eloquentes, et in dicendo suaves, atque ornati fuerunt: sint hae res, de quibus disputant, in aliis quibusdam studiis; oratio quidem ipsa propria est huius unius rationis, de qua loquimur et quaerimus.’

can communicate to others the things we have deliberated and thought upon with wisdom,’ Burchard wrote. ‘Aristotle’s discourse is so full of certain lights of its own that Cicero said it is like a gold-bearing river; and sometimes it is so agreeable, that one cannot imagine anything more so.’⁵⁷

You [Pico] are wrong if you believe that men can be taught by that sort of disputation which those barbarians use in the schools, which not only men in general but the initiates themselves (so to say) do not understand when they converse together. For not only is it a new kind of words unknown to people generally, but everything is so confused that, as in a labyrinth, one can find neither beginning nor end for things. Besides, they continually think up new and prodigious fancies and monstrous expressions by which, since they have no basis in reality, nothing can be understood.⁵⁸

The same thoughts about Aristotle’s eloquence and scholastic disparagement were later worded by the Greek scholar Theodore Gaza (1398–1475) in his *Libri de animalibus Aristotelis* (*The Books on Animals of Aristotle*) of 1476, a compilation of Aristotle’s biological treatises, that is *The History of Animals*, *The Parts of Animals*, and *On the Movement of Animals*, illustrating the thematic reach of this misconception which began with Petrarch.⁵⁹

Cicero’s ideas of eloquence as an almost essential component of philosophy were turned by Petrarch against his four averroist critics in *De sui ipsius ignorantia*.⁶⁰ ‘Eloquence,’

⁵⁷ Philip Melanchthon, *Responsio ad Picum Mirandulam* in *Opera omnia*, ed. C.G. Bretschneider (28 vols., Halle, 1874) ix, pp. 687–703. All English translations are from Q. Breen, ‘Melanchthon’s Reply to G. Pico della Mirandola’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 13 (1952), pp. 413–26, pp. 414–5. On the authorship of the reply, see E. Rummel, ‘Epistola Hermolai nova ac subditiua: A Declamation Falsely Ascribed to Philipp Melanchthon’, *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte*, 83 (1992), pp. 302–5. Franz Burchard’s life is largely sunk in obscurity, but some information is available in E. Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

⁵⁸ Melanchthon, *Responsio ad Picum Mirandulam* in *Opera omnia*, p. 692 and translated in Q. Breen, ‘Melanchthon’s Reply to G. Pico della Mirandola’, p. 417.

⁵⁹ Theodore Gaza, *Libri de animalibus* (Venice, 1476), 2r–v: ‘Videbam permulta errasse interpretes, tum imperitia linguae, tum aristotelicae disciplinae inscitia... Aut enim graece illi dixerunt quae latine audire homines latini desiderant, aut rerum aliarum nomina aliis improprie tribuerunt, aut nova ipsi inepte finxerunt.’ On Theodore, see S. Perfetti, ‘“Cultius atque integrius.” Teodoro Gaza, traduttore umanistico del *De partibus animalium*’, *Rinascimento*, second series, 35 (1995), pp. 253–86; J. Monfasani, ‘The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* and Aristotle’s *De Animalibus* in the Renaissance’ in A. Grafton (ed.), *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), pp. 205–47 reprinted in J. Monfasani, *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy. Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 205–47; P. Beullens and A. Gotthelf, ‘Theodore Gaza’s Translation of Aristotle’s *De Animalibus*: Content, Influence, and Date’, *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 47 (2007), pp. 469–513.

⁶⁰ On Petrarch’s reading of Cicero, see P. Blanc, ‘Pétrarque lecteur de Cicéron. Les scolies pétrarquienes du *De oratore* et de l’*Orator*’, *Studi Petrarqueschi*, 9 (1978), pp. 109–66.

Petrarch inveighs, ‘they despise it as our modern philosophers do... They deviate and depart so far from their leader that they think eloquence an impediment and a disgrace to philosophy. But in fact Aristotle considered it a great ornament and strove to unite eloquence and philosophy.’⁶¹ We ‘learned from Greek witnesses and from Cicero’s writings that Aristotle’s personal style was sweet, copious, and ornate’ and that it is ‘because of the coarseness or the envy of his translators [that] the text of Aristotle has come down to us so harsh and rough that it scarcely charms the ear or sticks in the memory’.⁶² The problem is not merely an aesthetic one. Inelegance distracts Aristotle’s moral philosophy from its central mission. ‘The goal announced by the philosopher in Book One of his *Ethics* is not realized in fact – namely, that we study this branch of philosophy not in order to know, but in order to become good’. Petrarch explains that ‘it is one thing to know, and another to love; one thing to understand, and another to will’. Petrarch will not deny that Aristotle ‘teaches us the nature of virtue. But’, for Petrarch, ‘reading him offers us none of those exhortations, or only a very few, that goad and inflame our minds to love virtue and hate vice’.⁶³ Cicero, Seneca, and Horace provide far better examples, since everyone ‘knows that they touch and pierce our vitals with the sharp, burning barbs of their eloquence. By these, the sluggish are aroused, the frigid are inflamed, the drowsy are awakened, the weak are strengthened, the prostrate are raised, and the earthbound are lifted up toward lofty thoughts and noble desires.’⁶⁴ On closer inspection we see Petrarch’s moral philosopher suddenly becoming Cicero’s orator.

The true moral philosophers and valuable teachers of virtues are those whose first and last purpose is to make their students and readers good. They not only teach the definitions of virtue and vice,

⁶¹ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance*, p. 233.

⁶² Ibid., p. 313. On Petrarch’s relationship to the *Ethics* and *Politics*, see P. de Nolhac, *Petrarque et l’humanisme* (2 vols., Paris, 1907), ii, pp. 151–2; B.L. Ullman, ‘Petrarch’s Favorite Books’, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 54 (1923), pp. 21–38 reprinted in *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Rome, 1973), pp. 113–33, p. 121.

⁶³ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance*, p. 315; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103b25–30.

⁶⁴ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance*, p. 317. See also Erasmus, *Convivium religiosum* in *Opera omnia*, ed. L.E. Halkin *et al.* (– vols., Amsterdam, 1972–), i, tome 3, pp. 251–2 (col. 682): ‘Contra quum hos quosdam recentiores lego de republica, oeconomica aut ethica praecipientes, deum immortalem, quam frigent prae illis, imo quam non videntur sentire quod scribunt, ut ego citius patiar petire totum Scotum cum aliquot sui similibus, quam libros unius Cicetonis aut Plutarchi, non quod illos in totum damnem, sed quod ex his sentiam me reddi meliorem, quum ex illorum lectione surgam, nescio quomodo frigidius affectus erga veram virtutem, sed irritatio ad contentionem.’

haranguing us about virtue's splendor and vice's drabness. They also instill in our breasts both love and zeal for what is good, and hatred and abhorrence of evil.⁶⁵

Petrarch reasserts the synergy between mind and language, blurring the distinction between philosophy and rhetoric he implied to his friend Tommaso da Messina (1302–41) in his earlier letter *De eloquentia* (*Concerning Eloquence*) of around 1333. 'The care of the mind calls for a philosopher, while the proper use of language requires an orator. We must neglect neither one if, as they say, we are to return to the earth and be led about by the mouths of men.'⁶⁶ For Petrarch, the care of the mind now calls for both.

Petrarch's Ciceronian union of eloquence and moral philosophy quickly filtered into Renaissance discourse, largely by way of the Chancellor of Florence Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406).⁶⁷ Salutati sang Petrarch's praises in a letter of 1374 to Roberto Guidi (*d.* 1375), Count of Battifolle. 'Good God, how much did he excel in philosophy, which is known to be a divine gift and guide to all virtues, and, to borrow a Ciceronian phrase, an expunger of vices and the empress and teacher of all the sciences and arts', that is not the philosophy 'which modern sophists with their empty, arrogant, inane, and impudent garrulity admire in the schools, but... that, which improves the soul, increases the virtues, washes clean the stain of vice, and disregarding the ambiguities of disputations, elucidates the truth in everything.'⁶⁸ Here the parallel between Petrarch and Salutati is evident.

⁶⁵ Petrarch, *On His Own Ignorance*, pp. 317–9.

⁶⁶ Petrarch, *Rerum familiarium*, ed. V. Rossi (4 vols., Florence, 1933–42), i, 1.9. All English translations are from Petrarch, *Rerum familiarium libri*, ed. A.S. Bernardo (3 vols., Albany, N.Y., 1975 and Baltimore, Md., 1982–5), i, pp. 47–8. Cf. Virgil, *Georgica*, ed. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass., 1916), 3.8–9: 'temptanda via est, qua me quoque possim tollere humo victorque virum volitare per ora.' On Petrarch's division of rhetoric and philosophy, see C.E. Trinkaus, *The Poet as Philosopher: Petrarch and the Formation of Renaissance Consciousness* (New Haven, 1979), pp. 33–44.

⁶⁷ On Salutati and eloquence, see H. Gray, 'Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 24 (1963), pp. 497–514; J.E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton, N.J., 1968).

⁶⁸ Coluccio Salutati, *Epistolario*, ed. F. Novati (5 vols., Rome, 1896), i, pp. 176–87, pp. 178–9: 'Deus optime, in philosophia, que quidem donum divinum omnium moderatrix noscitur esse virtutum et, ut Ciceroniano utar vocabulo, expultrix vitiorum et omnium scientiarum et artium imperatrix ac magistra, quantum excessit! Non dico in hac, quam moderni sophiste ventosa iactatione inani et impudente garrulitate mirantur in scolis; sed in ea, que animos excolit, virtutes edificat, vitiorum sordes eluit, rerumque omnium, omissis disputationum ambagibus, veritatem elucidat.' On Salutati, see B.L. Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Padua, 1963); R.G. Witt, *Coluccio Salutati and His Public Letters* (Geneva, 1976); D. de Rosa, *Coluccio Salutati: il cancelliere e il pensatore politico* (Florence, 1980); R.G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham, N.C., 1983).

Of course, Salutati soon distanced himself from Petrarch's radical stoicism and hostility towards scholasticism, as evidenced in part by the scholastic form of his *De nobilitate legum et medicinae* (*On the Excellence of Law and Medicine*) of 1399 (better known for its defence of the active rather than contemplative life).⁶⁹ The departure was evinced by Salutati's friendship with the Augustinian friar Luigi Marsili (1342–94) and in his reply to the Professor of Canon Law and later Bishop of Padua Francesco Zabarella's (1360–1417) letter of condolence for the death of Salutati's son Piero.⁷⁰ Cicero had argued in his *Tusculanarum disputatio* (*Tusculan Disputations*) that solace from grief over someone's death may be found in the fact that 'death is no evil', that it is 'a common lot of life', and that 'it is utter folly to be uselessly overcome by sorrow when one realizes that there is no possible advantage to it'.⁷¹ Salutati, however, promptly and strongly dismissed Cicero's *solacia* and by extension Zabarella's consolation.

Remember that Aristotle maintains that death is the most frightening thing of all and that men are frightened by evil things, not good ones. So that you do not think I am alone in regarding frightening things as evil, listen to what the Philosopher says in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: 'We fear those things which are frightening. Speaking without qualification, these are evils; for this reason, fear is defined as the anticipation of evil. Therefore, we fear all evil things, such as disgrace, poverty, disease and death.' And a little later on: 'The most frightening thing, however, is death for it is the

⁶⁹ Salutati, *De nobilitate legum et medicinae*, ed. E. Garin (Florence, 1947), pp. 230–2: 'De hac, quod et tu tangis, inquit Arpinas: "O vite philosophia dux, o virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum, quid non modo nos, sed omnino vita hominum sine te esse potuisset! Tu urbes peperisti; tu, dissipatos homines, in societatem vite convocasti; tu eos inter se primo domiciliis, deinde coniugiis, tu literarum et vocum communione iunxisti; tu inventrix legum, tu magistra morum et discipline fuisti." Que Ciceronis magnifica verba consideres velim, ut dicas quid inter hec invenis quod vel physicam respiciat vel medicinam. Et ubi videris omnes has philosophie laudes ad moralem partem solummodo pertinere, certissimus esse possis illum nescio quem commentatorem tuum quid philosophie nomine designetur non intellexisse, quoniam hoc vocabulum studium et amorem sapientie connotet apud Grecos, quo soleat totum philosophie corpus intelligi vel sola moralitas designari.' See Cicero, *Tusculanarum disputationum*, ed. J.E. King (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), 5.2.5. On the importance of Salutati's *De nobilitate* for the humanist idea of active life, see R.G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 326–30. On its importance for the idea of a science of politics, see M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp. 75–8. Cf. H. Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (2 vols. Princeton, N.J., 1955), i, 79–96.

⁷⁰ On the relationship between scholastics and *Trecento* humanists in Florence, see E. Garin, 'La cultura fiorentina nella seconda metà del 300 e i "barbari britanni"', *La rassegna di letteratura italiana*, 64 (1960), pp. 181–95; C. Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica nell'Umanesimo. Invenzione e metodo nella cultura del xv e xvi secolo* (Milan, 1968), pp. 9–27.

⁷¹ Cicero, *Tusculanarum disputatio*, 3.32.77: 'Erit igitur in consolationibus prima medicina docere aut nullum malum esse aut admodum parvum; altera et de communi condicione vitae et proprie, si quid sit de ipsius, qui maereat, disputandum, tertia summam esse stultitiam frustra confici maerore, cum intelligas nihil posse profici.'

end.’ These are the words of the prince of philosophers in the *Ethics*. Shout, if you like; and let the whole school of Stoics shout. That truth which appears plainly to the senses carries more weight with me than the opinion, not to say the ravings, of the Stoics. They sought a kind of virtue which has not been observed in the past and is not to be observed now, and they looked for acts and virtues which are impossible to find in the weak flesh of mortal men. The authority of Aristotle and the moderation of the Peripatetics are superior to the sternness or, to be more precise, the cold-heartedness and unattainable logic of the Stoics.⁷²

Reality is at issue here. Salutati replaced the dispassionate ideals of the Stoics with the obvious, concrete, and more moderate views of Aristotle.⁷³

However, Salutati’s Petrarchan commitment to a union between wisdom and eloquence persisted and found full expression in his attempts to revive the study of Greek letters in the West. This revival, coupled with a new theory of translation and misconceptions about Aristotle’s eloquence, resulted in a new version of Aristotle’s *Politics* and appreciation of a hitherto neglected aspect of his political thought in the Renaissance.

III. THE REVIVAL OF GREEK LETTERS IN THE WEST

The Renaissance of the twelfth century brought about surprisingly little knowledge of Greek in Europe. One of the first to teach Greek language and grammar on the Continent was the Basilian monk Barlaam (1290–1348) while on visit to the papal curia in Avignon in 1342. Barlaam’s student, the Calabrian Leonzio Pilato (*d.* 1365), also taught Greek in Florence in 1360 at the request of Petrarch and Boccaccio (1313–75). But there is no evidence to suggest that either Barlaam or Leonzio Pilato had any real impact on the study of Greek letters in the Renaissance.

The Byzantine scholar and diplomat Manuel Chrysoloras’ (1355–1415) appearance on the Florentine stage in 1396 at the request of Coluccio Salutati kindled the revival of Greek

⁷² Salutati, *Epistolario*, iii, pp. 456–79. I quote from the English translation in R.G. Witt, ‘Coluccio Salutati’ in Kraye (ed.), *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts: Moral and Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1997), i, pp. 179–91.

⁷³ On sorrow and consolation in Salutati’s thought, see G.W. McClure, *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton, N.J., 2014), pp. 93–115.

letters in the West, his Greek lessons and grammar *Erotemata* (*Grammatical Questions*) of c. 1410 achieving tremendous popularity.⁷⁴ As the humanist and historian Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) relates in his *Italia Illustrata* (*Italy Illuminated*) of 1448–58, Chrysoloras ‘taught Greek to nearly all those students of Giovanni Malpighini’ (1346–1417), that is Pier Paolo Vergerio (1375–1445), Roberto Rossi (dates unknown), Jacopo d’Angelo (1360–1411), Guarino da Verona (1370–1460), and Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446) ‘in Venice, in Florence and in the Roman Curia, with which he was associated. His teaching lasted only a few years, but it had the effect that those who did not know Greek appeared ignorant in Latin.’⁷⁵

The revival was as much the product of an inherent fascination with Greek culture and desire to read hitherto un-translated literature at the time as it was the outcome of a frustration with existing Latin renderings of Greek classics. Medieval Latin translations of Greek writings were said to be *ad verbum* (word for word), a custom born of a mystical reverence towards author and text.⁷⁶ The practice made for stilted and inelegant yet not necessarily unsophisticated renderings of Greek works. The dissatisfaction that humanists had with them was epitomised by Salutati’s efforts to revise the Archbishop of Thebes Simon Atumano’s (1348–87) literal Latin translation of Plutarch’s *De remediis irae* (*On the Control of Anger*) of 1395.⁷⁷ Even more emblematic are Salutati’s words in the preface to his new edition. ‘In these times there are no Ciceros, Jeromes, Rufinuses, Ambroses or Chalcidiuses, no Cassiodoruses, no Evagriuses, and no Boethiuses, whose translations are so beautiful and

⁷⁴ Salutati, *Epistolario*, iii, pp. 119–25, p. 124: ‘Iam enim video, cum apud nos mansurus sis, nos te non Manuelem, sed, completo vocabulo Hemanuelem, quod interpretatum est nobiscum Deus, rationabiliter vocaturos; es etenim expectatio gentium, hoc est multorum, qui tuum adventum plusquam avidè demorantur, ut scientia tua, quod Dei donum est, tecum quasi deo quodam fruantur.’ On Chrysoloras’ impact on Italian Renaissance humanism, see G. Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini e le origini dell’umanesimo* (3 vols., Florence, 1941), i; I. Thompson, ‘Manuel Chrysoloras and the Early Italian Renaissance’, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 7 (1966), pp. 63–82; R. Maisano and A. Rollo (eds.), *Manuele Crisolora e il ritorno del greco in occidente* (Naples, 2002). On Greek grammars in the Renaissance, see A. Pertusi, ‘*Erotemata*: per la storia e le fonti delle prime grammatiche greche a stampa’, *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 5 (1962), pp. 329–51; P. Botley, *Learning Greek in Western Europe, 1396–1529: Grammars, Lexica, and Classroom Texts* (Philadelphia, Pa., 2010). On the broader subject of Greek Studies in the Renaissance, see N.G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1992).

⁷⁵ Flavio Biondo, *Italy Illuminated*, ed. J.A. White (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 2005–), i, 1.6.27.

⁷⁶ On the language in medieval translations of Aristotle, see B.G. Dod, ‘Aristoteles Latinus’ in Norman Kretzmann *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 45–79; R. Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 37–62.

⁷⁷ On Simon Atumano, see K. Setton, ‘The Byzantine Background to the Italian Renaissance’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 100 (1956), pp. 1–76, pp. 47–51.

sweet that no ornament or perspicuity in that which they translated is left wanting.’⁷⁸ The absence of medieval translators from the list, such as William of Moerbeke (1215–86), is indicative of their standing among humanists. As Biondo again relates in his *Italia illustrata*, ‘the arrival of Greek letters was no small help in the acquisition of eloquence: and it was actually a stimulus to doing so, because, quite apart from the sheer knowledge and the huge supply of historical and moral material they gained from it, those who knew Greek attempted a good many translations into Latin.’⁷⁹

Chrysoloras brought about not only a revival of Greek letters but a revolution in the theory and practice of translation, that is from *ad verbum* to *ad sententiam* (according to the sense), a method vindicated by Cicero in his *De optimo genere oratorum* (*On the Best Kind of Orator*).

I translated the most famous orations of the two most eloquent Attic orators, Aeschines and Demosthenes, orations which they delivered against each other, and I did not translate them as an interpreter would, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the figures of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. In so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not think I ought to count them out to the reader like coins, but to pay them by weight, as it were.⁸⁰

Aquinas had highlighted the shortcomings of translating *ad verbum* albeit from Latin into the vernacular, in the *Prooemium* to his *Contra errores graecorum* (*Against the Errors of the Greek*) of 1263.

⁷⁸ Salutati, *Epistolario*, ii, pp. 480–3, p. 482: ‘Non sunt hoc tempore Cicerones, Hieronymi, Rufini, Ambrosii vel Chalcidii, non Cassiodori, non Evagrii, non Boetii, quorum translationes tante sunt venustatis atque dulcedinis, quod nichil possit ornatus vel perspicuitatis in his que transtulerunt desiderari.’

⁷⁹ Biondo, *Italy Illuminated*, i, 1.6.30 (330). See also Poggio Bracciolini’s letter to Guarino Veronesi in Poggio Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. H. Harth (3 vols., Florence, 1984–7), iii, pp. 347–9, p. 348: ‘Utilitas praeterea quam latinis litteris attulit, que ante suum adventum mute, mance, debiles videbantur. Excitata sunt eius opere ingenia ad graecarum litterarum studia, que magnum doctrine lumen nostro seculo attulerunt. Tum ad eloquentiam commoti sunt permulti, in qua pristinum fere dicendi ornatum recuperatum videmus.’ On Biondo, see D. Hay, ‘Flavio Biondo and the Middle Ages’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 45 (1959), pp. 97–127 reprinted in D. Hay, *Renaissance Essays* (London, 1988), pp. 35–65.

⁸⁰ Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum*, ed. H.M. Hubbell (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), 5.14–5. See also Horace, *Ars poetica*, ed. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), lines 128–35: ‘Difficile est proprie communia dicere; tuque rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus, quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus. Publica materies privati iuris erit, si non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem, nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus interpres, nec desilies imitator in artum, unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.’ On Cicero as a translator, see D.M. Jones, ‘Cicero as a Translator’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 6 (1959), pp. 22–34.

‘It is apparent that if what is spoken in a literary way in Latin is explained in the vulgar tongue, the explanation will not be decent if it is simply word for word’.⁸¹ As the Roman humanist Cencio de’ Rustici (1380–1445) relates in his translation of Aristides’ *Dyonisius* of 1416, Chrysoloras thought along similar yet somewhat sharper lines with regard to Latin renderings of Greek classics. ‘Manuel used to say about translation that to translate *ad verbum* into Latin was wholly ineffective. It was not only absurd, he averred, but even, sometimes, perverted the sense of the Greek. One must translate *ad sententiam*, he said.’⁸² Chrysoloras’ position formally challenged the orthodoxy, the widely held assumption that meaning could only be retained by literally mirroring the original. The move indicated a difference in conceptions of language, from atemporal to contextual, that is sensitive to the ‘historicity of language’ (or *complexe significabile*).⁸³

Of course, the issue of how to translate Greek classics in the Renaissance became far more complex and far less clear-cut in time, with most humanists adopting a variety of

⁸¹ Aquinas, *Contra errores Graecorum* in Aquinas, *Opera omnia* [the Leonine edition] (Rome, 1882–), xIA, Proemium: ‘Apparet enim quod si ea quae litteraliter in Latino dicuntur, vulgariter exponantur, indecens erit expositio, si semper verbum ex verbo sumatur. Multo igitur magis quando ea quae in una lingua dicuntur, transferuntur in aliam, ita quod verbum sumatur ex verbo, non est mirum si aliqua dubietas relinquitur.’ See P. Chiesa, ‘*Ad verbum* o *ad sensum*? Modelli e coscienza metodologica della traduzione tra tarda antichità e alto medioevo’, *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 1 (1987), pp. 1–51.

⁸² Cencio de’ Rustici’s preface in Aelius Aristides, *Dyonisius*, (Constance, 1416) reprinted in L. Bertalot, ‘Cincius Romanus und seine Briefe’, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 21 (1929–30), pp. 209–55 and reprinted in L. Bertalot, *Studien zum italienischen und deutschen Humanismus*, ed. P.O. Kristeller (2 vols., Rome, 1975), ii, pp. 131–80, p. 133: ‘Sed ut de interpretis natura aliquid dicam, ferebat Manuel homo sine ulla dubitatione divinus conversionem in latinum ad verbum minime valere. Nam non modo absurdum esse asseverabat, verum etiam interdum grecam sententiam omnino pervertere. Sed ad sententiam transferre opus esse aiebat hoc pacto ut ii qui huiusmodi rebus operam darent, legem sibi ipsis indicarent, ut nullo modo proprietates grecae immutarentur; nam si quispiam, quo luculentius apertiusque suis hominibus loquatur, aliquid graece proprietatis immutaret, eum non interpretis sed exponentis officio uti.’ All English translations are from J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, i, p. 44. On Chrysoloras’ theory of translation as related by Cencio, see G. Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini*, i, pp. 89–91; E. Berti, ‘Traduzioni oratorie fedeli’, *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 2 (1988), pp. 245–66; M. Cortesi, ‘La tecnica del tradurre presso gli umanisti’ in C. Leonardi and B. Munk Olsen (eds.), *The Classical Tradition in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Spoleto, 1995), pp. 143–68. On Renaissance theories of translation more generally, see B.P. Copenhaver, ‘Translation, Terminology and Style in Philosophical Discourse’, in C.B. Schmitt *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 77–110; P. Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance. The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti and Erasmus* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁸³ On the relationship between the shift in translation method and theory of language, see H. Harth, ‘Leonardo Brunis Selbstverständnis als Übersetzer’, *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 50 (1968), pp. 41–63; H.B. Gerl, *Philosophie und Philologie: Leonardo Brunis Übertragung der Nikomachischen Ethik in ihren philosophische Prämissen* (Munich, 1981). The shift in many ways appears to foreshadow Gottlob Frege’s *context principle* famously redeveloped by Ludwig Wittgenstein, see Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (Breslau, 1884), x; Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logicus-Philosophicus*, ed. C.K. Ogden (London, 1922), 3.3 and 3.314, and *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees (Oxford, 1953), §49.

techniques to suit different purposes and texts, that is either religious, philosophical, historical, poetical, or rhetorical. Jerome himself had defended some flexibility in approach when it came to pagan or religious texts in his *De optimo genere interpretandi* (*On the Best Method of Translating*). ‘Not only do I admit, but I openly profess that in translating Greek works, except the Holy Scripture, that is where the order of the words is a mystery, I do so not word for word but sense for sense’.⁸⁴ The practice of moving across the spectrum of *ad verbum* to *ad sententiam* translation according to the original was vindicated in the Renaissance, for instance, by the likes of Florentine scholar Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459) in his *Apologeticus* (*Apology*) of 1455. ‘For philosophers and theologians, although, as we have said we cannot produce a *recta interpretatio* in some translations if we translate word for word, yet neither should the translation be too loose and free and magnificently embellished with the beauties and decorations of words and phrases’.⁸⁵

The Ciceronian model, however, soon became commonplace thanks in no small part to Salutati’s successor to the chancellery of Florence, Chrysoloras’ most eminent student, Leonardo Bruni. Bruni inherited many of the beliefs and assumptions about eloquence, Aristotle, and the scholastics held by Petrarch in *De sui ipsius ignorantia*; nowhere is this more evident than in the words he puts into the mouth of the humanist and book-hunter Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437) in the *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum* (*Dialogues to Pier Paolo Vergerio*) of around 1401.⁸⁶ A former student of Malpighini’s, Bruni had abandoned a career in law in

⁸⁴ Jerome, *Liber de optimo genere interpretandi* (*Epistula* 57): *ein Kommentar*, ed. G.J.M. Bartelink (Leiden, 1980), pp. 9–22, p. 13 (5.2): ‘Ego enim non solum fateor, sed libera voce profiteor, me in interpretatione Graecorum, absque Scripturis sanctis, ubi et verborum ordo mysterium est, non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu. Habeoque huius rei magistrum Tullium, qui Protagoram Platonis, et Oeconomicon Xenophontis et Aeschinis ac Demosthenis duas contra se orationes pulcherrimas transtulit.’

⁸⁵ Giannozzo Manetti, *Apologeticus*, ed. A. de Petris (Rome, 1981), pp. 120–1. All English translations are from P. Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 111. On Manetti’s theory of translation, see also A. de Petris, ‘Le teorie umanistiche del tradurre e l’*Apologeticus* di Giannozzo Manetti’, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et de la Renaissance*, 37 (1975), pp. 15–32.

⁸⁶ Leonardo Bruni, *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum* in *Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. P. Viti (Turin, 1996), pp. 78–143, pp. 94–8: ‘O praeclaros nostri temporis philosophos, siquidem ea docent, quae ipsi nesciunt; quos ego nequeo satis mirari, quo pacto philosophiam didicerint, cum litteras ignorent; nam plures solecismos quam verba faciunt cum loquuntur; itaque illos stertentes quam loquentes audire malletm. Hos tamen si quis roget, cuius auctoritate ac preceptis in hac sua preclara sapientia nitantur: “Philosophi”, dicunt. Hoc autem cum dicunt, Aristotelis intelligi volunt. Atque cum quidpiam confirmare opus est, proferunt dicta in his libris quos Aristotelis esse dicunt: verba aspera, inepta,

order to study Greek under Chrysoloras as he recounts in his autobiography *De temporibus suis* (*Memoirs*) of around 1441.⁸⁷ Bruni soon began churning out Latin versions of Greek orations and philosophical works, his first translation of a Greek classic, that is St. Basil's *Ad adolescentes* (*Letter to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature*) of 1400, inflaming the controversy over the relationship between Pagan literature and Christianity.⁸⁸

The shift from *ad verbum* to *ad sententiam* translation was cemented in his neo-Latin version of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of around 1416. Bruni himself explains his decision in the *Prefatio in novam traductionem Ethicorum Aristotelis* (*Preface to the New Translation of Aristotle's Ethics*) of the same year.

I recently undertook to do into Latin Aristotle's *Ethics*, not because it had never been translated, but because it had been translated, as it would seem from the manner of it, rather by barbarians than by Latins. Clearly the author of that version, whoever he was (though he was evidently a Dominican), was sufficiently acquainted neither with the Greek nor with the Latin language. In many places he has misunderstood the Greek, and renders the Latin in such a puerile and unlearned fashion that he really ought to be ashamed of so clumsy and clownish a performance. Indeed, it frequently happens that in ignorance of the best and most approved Latinity, he goes about like a beggar in the midst of wealth, and knows not whence to supply the Latin word for the Greek. So, desperately and in the poverty of his invention he leaves the Greek as it lies. He is, so to speak, a mongrel, half Greek and half Latin; deficient in both languages, competent in neither... Yet Aristotle was ever studious of eloquence, and connected wisdom with the art of speaking, as Cicero himself frequently attests, and

dissona, que cuiusvis aures obtundere ac fatigare possent. Haec dicit, inquit, Philosophus; huic contradicere nefas est, idemque apud illos valet et "ipse dixit" et veritas; quasi vero aut ille solum philosophus fuerit, aut eius sententia ita fixe sint, quasi eas Pythius Apollo ex sanctissimo adito suo ediderit... Nam studiosum eloquentie fuisse Aristotelem atque incredibili quadam cum suavitate scripsisse, Ciceronis sententia est. Nunc vero hos Aristotelis libros, si tamen eos Aristotelis esse putandum est, et molestos in legendo et absonos videmus, tantaque obscuritate perplexos, ut preter Sybillam aut Edipodem nemo intelligat.' On the *Dialogi*, see D. Quint, 'Humanism and Modernity: A Reconsideration of Bruni's Dialogues', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 38 (1985), pp. 423–45. On Renaissance dialogues more generally, see D. Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue: Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980); V. Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo* (Cambridge, 2008).

⁸⁷ Bruni, *Memoirs*, ed. J. Hankins and D.J.W. Bradley (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), pp. 320–3.

⁸⁸ On Bruni as a translator, see J. Hankins, 'Translation Practice in the Renaissance: The Case of Leonardo Bruni', *Études classiques*, 4 (1994), pp. 154–75 reprinted in *Humanism and Platonism*, i, pp. 177–92. On the linguistic implications of Bruni's theory of translation, see H. Harth, 'Leonardo Brunis Selbstverständnis als Übersetzer'; H.B. Gerl, *Philosophie und Philologie*. On Bruni's version of St. Basil's *Ad adolescentes*, see L. Schucan, *Das Nachleben von Basilus 'Epistola ad adolescentes'* (Geneva, 1973). On the Pagan-Christian literature controversy, see Salutati, *Epistolario*, iv, pp. 170–205; Giovanni Dominici, *Lucula Noctis* in E. Hunt, 'Iohannis Dominici Lucula Noctis' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1940). For a list and chronology of Bruni's works, see J. Hankins, 'The Chronology of Leonardo Bruni's Later Works (1437–1443)', *Studi medievali e umanistici*, 6 (2007), pp. 11–50.

as his own books show, beautifully written as they are, with great attention to eloquence. If Aristotle possesses now any awareness of our affairs, surely he has been long since outraged at the absurdity and inconcinnity of this translation, indignant at its barbarity, and ready to deny that these works are his; he would surely wish to appear among the Latins as he has made himself appear among the Greeks.⁸⁹

Grosseteste's Latin version of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of c. 1240 had been around for almost two centuries.⁹⁰ Bruni's version valiantly challenged it and its revised version known as the *Liber ethicorum* by way of a rendition that showed greater sensitivity to the Latin.⁹¹ The metaphor of the beggar in the midst of wealth is key. 'And let no one object to me the poverty of the Latin language,' Bruni added later in the *Prefatio*. 'That language is abundantly rich, acquainted not only with every form of expression, but with ample embellishments as well. For an ignorant to deal with it and ascribe his own faults to the language is both intolerable and extremely stupid'.⁹² Bruni went on to outline the linguistic changes and, by extension, Stoic-Ciceronian elements he had brought into his new version, elements that would later be developed by the French Benedictine monk Joachim Périon (1498–1559) in his own version of the *Nicomachean Ethics* of 1552.⁹³

⁸⁹ Bruni, *Prefatio in novam traductionem Ethicorum Aristotelis* in *Leonardo Bruni Aretino Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften mit einer Chronologie seiner Werke und Briefe*, ed. H. Baron (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 76–81. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts*, ed. G. Griffiths et al. (Binghamton, N.Y., 1987), p. 213–7, p. 213.

⁹⁰ On Grosseteste, see R.W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1986); J.J. McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford, 2002); J.P. Cunningham (ed.), *Robert Grosseteste: His Thought and Its Impact* (Toronto, 2012).

⁹¹ As James Hankins has kindly pointed out to me, Bruni also knew James of Venice's Latin translation of Aristotle's *Ethics*, see Hankins, 'The *Ethics* Controversy' in idem, *Humanism and Platonism*, i, pp. 193–239.

⁹² Bruni, *Prefatio in novam traductionem Ethicorum Aristotelis*, p. 78 and translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 213.

⁹³ Bruni, *Prefatio in novam traductionem Ethicorum Aristotelis*, p. 79: 'Quid enim tritius apud eos, qui de moribus scribunt, quam *honesti* vocabulum, cum et Stoici, quorum Seneca maxime inter nostros eminet, fines bonorum in honestate collocarint, et frequentissime disceptetur, num utile ab honesto separari queat, et omnes virtutis actiones honesto contineri dicamus. Enim vero hic pro *honesto* Graece ab Aristotele ubique posito semper Latine *bonum* expressit. Perabsurde quidem! Nam etsi omne honestum est bonum, tamen aliter de honesto loquimur, aliter de bono; ut etiam aliter de animali, aliter de substantia, quamvis omne animal substantia sit. Quodsi, quia omne *honestum* sit bonum, propterea *bonum* interpretari licebit, pro *utili* quoque, ubicumque positum fuerit, *bonum* dicemus, ita tria maxima, quae in philosophia versantur (*bonum, utile et honestum*), in unum confundemus...'. I give here the Latin for obvious reasons though the passage is translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 214–5. On the distinction between Cicero and the Stoics, see J.A. Kraye, 'Ethnicorum omnium sanctissimus: Marcus Aurelius and his *Meditations* from Xylander to Diderot' in J.A. Kraye and M.W.F. Stone (eds.), *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy* (London, 2000), pp. 107–34, p. 107. On Joachim Périon, see the

Bruni's translation provoked immediate criticism, some aimed at Aristotle's eloquence and some levelled at his own method.⁹⁴ One correspondent, called Demetrius, challenged the Petrarchan presupposition of Aristotle's eloquence in a now lost letter of around 1418. Bruni, in his own reply maintained that Aristotle was not only eloquent but had 'brought great eloquence to those subjects seemingly incapable of any eloquence.'⁹⁵ He formally defended his position in his *De interpretatione recta* (*On the Correct Way to Translate*) of 1426, generally reputed to be the first modern treatise on translation.

Some time ago I translated from Greek into Latin Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and added to it a preface in which I discussed and refuted a great many mistakes made by the old translator. There are some persons, as I now hear, who are critical of my refutation as having been too ungentle. They say that, whatever his errors, the old translator brought his work before the public in good faith, to the extent of his understanding, and deserves therefore not blame, but praise... Now I admit that I was rather more heated in my criticism than I ought to have been, but the reason was my sense of indignation. It gave me real pain, anguish even, to see books that in Greek were filled with elegance, delight, and a certain fathomless beauty, defiled and disfigured in Latin by the worst sort of translation.⁹⁶

'It should be thought an inexcusable act of wickedness for a man who is not really learned or literary to attempt a translation'.⁹⁷ The same thought can later be found eloquently written in

critical bibliography in J. Kecskeméti *et al.*, *La France des humanistes hellénistes* (2 vols., Turnhout, 1999), i, pp. 350–1. On the impact of this 'Roman' Aristotelianism on early-modern political thought, see R. Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 1–30.

⁹⁴ On the *Ethics* controversy, see J. Hankins, 'The *Ethics* Controversy' in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 201–8; J. Hankins, 'Traduire l'Éthique d'Aristote: Leonardo Bruni et ses critiques' in F. Mariani Zini (ed.), *Penser entre les lignes: Philosophie et philologie au Quattrocento* (Paris, 2001), pp. 133–59; J. Hankins, 'Notes on Leonardo Bruni's Translation of the 'Nicomachean Ethics' and Its Reception in the Fifteenth Century' in J. Hamesse (ed.), *Les traducteurs au travail. Leurs manuscrits et leurs méthodes* (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 427–47. All these articles have been collated and reprinted as 'The *Ethics* Controversy' in *Humanism and Platonism*, i, pp. 193–240.

⁹⁵ Bruni, *Leonardus Demetrio S.* in Bruni, *Epistolarium libri VIII*, ed. L. Mehus (2 vols., Florence, 1741), i, pp. 137–40, p. 138: 'Invenies locos nullius eloquentiae capaces eloquentissime ab eo tractatos, rebusque obscurissimis splendorem et claritatem per eloquentiam attulisse.' For attempts to identify Demetrius, see E. Franceschini, 'Leonardo Bruni e il 'vetus interpres' dell'*Etica Nicomachea* di Aristotele' in C. Antoni and G. Billanovich (eds.), *Medioevo e Rinascimento: studi in onore di Bruno Nardi* (2 vols., Florence, 1955), i, pp. 300–19, p. 302, fn. 9; Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 370, fn. 9.

⁹⁶ Bruni, *De interpretatione recta* in *Opere*, pp. 150–93, p. 150. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 217–34, p. 217.

⁹⁷ Bruni, *De interpretatione recta*, p. 176 and translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 224.

Sir John Denham's (1615–69) poem *To Sir Richard Fanshaw, Upon His Translation of 'Pastor Fido'* of 1648. 'Nor ought a genius less than his that writ Attempt translation'.⁹⁸

Of course, the barrage of assaults continued well into the fifteenth century, most famously in the form of the Bishop of Burgos Alfonso Cartegna's (1384–1456) *Libellus contra Leonardum* (*Booklet against Leonardo Bruni*) of around 1430 and Battista dei Giudici's (1429–84) *Apologia traductionis antique libri ethicorum Aristotelis* (*Apology of the Old Translations of Aristotle's Books on Ethics*) of around 1484. Cartegna's remarks about Bruni's *Ethics* are illuminating.

When I had read his preface and glanced through several passages of the book in a superficial and perfunctory way, I was prepared to applaud the man's eloquence and the brilliance of his style, but I was horrified at the result he thought to achieve, and I was upset that so important a work, which has influenced all the sciences in various connections, was thus to be ridden with loose reins.⁹⁹

Even George and Bessarion weighed into the debate by supporting the Greek émigré, Chair of Rhetoric and Philosophy in Florence, John Argyropoulos' (1415–87) own version of the *Ethics* of 1464.¹⁰⁰

Bruni's views, however, soon became the orthodoxy. The immense popularity of his *Ethics* and positive response from fellow humanists attest to it.¹⁰¹ It was, to be sure, the very

⁹⁸ John Denham, *To Sir Richard Fanshaw, Upon His Translation of 'Pastor Fido'* in *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, ed. T.H. Banks (New Haven, Conn., 1928), pp. 143–4.

⁹⁹ Alfonso Cartegna, *Libellus contra Leonardum* in A. Birkenmajer, 'Der Streit des Alonso von Cartagena mit Leonardo Bruni Aretino', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, 20 (1920), pp. 129–210, pp. 164–5: 'Inter cetera vero, cum una noctium de moralibus se sermo ingessisset, ingeniosus adolescens nepos tuus novam quandam Ethicorum translationem in medium produxit, quam Leonardum noviter scripsisse tradebat. Cuius cum praefationem legissem et voluminis aliquos passus sic prefunctorie et superficietenus pertransissem, ardorem stili cognovi et hominis eloquentiam laudavi, effectum vero, quem se consecuturum putavit, abhorruui molesteque tuli in tam egregium opus, in omnibus fere iam scientiis sub allegationibus diversis transfusum, sic solutis habenis invehere; nec enim sic nova cudere decet, ut vetera funditus evertamus.' All English translations are from J. Hankins, 'The Ethics Controversy' in *Humanism and Platonism*, i, p. 201. Battista dei Giudici, *Apologia traductionis antique libri ethicorum Aristotelis contra invecivam traductionemque Leonardi Aretini* in S. Ebbersmeyer, *Homo Agens: studien zur Genese und Struktur frühhumanistischer Moralphilosophie* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 285–96.

¹⁰⁰ On Argyropoulos' version of the *Ethics*, see J.E. Siegel, 'The teaching of Argyropoulos and the Rhetoric of the First Humanists' in T. Raab and J.E. Siegel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, N.J., 1969), pp. 237–60. On Argyropoulos more generally, see G. Cammelli, *I dottori bizantini*, ii. On the reception of Aristotle's *Ethics* in the Renaissance, see D. Lines, 'Aristotle's *Ethics* in the Renaissance' in J. Miller (ed.), *The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics* (Cambridge:, 2012), pp. 171–93; D. Lines, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300–1650): The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education* (Leiden, 2002).

first step towards a conversion from Plato to Aristotle that would crystallise in Bruni's *comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis*. A letter to Niccolò Niccoli of 1403 reveals Bruni's early fascination with Platonic philosophy. His early translations of Plato's dialogues were meant to make his friend, in Bruni's words, 'despise all other authors'.¹⁰² His views in the *Prooemium* to his *Gorgias* of 1410 are emblematic.¹⁰³ They reflect the opinions held by Petrarch, Salutati, and Chrysoloras.¹⁰⁴ The Aristotelian turn was partly ideological. Aristotle's justification of Florentine upper-class values and advocacy of the mixed constitution better served Bruni's republican goals.¹⁰⁵ There was a propaganda war between Florence and Milan in the Renaissance.¹⁰⁶ Decembrio was using Plato to justify the rule of the Visconti.¹⁰⁷ Bruni was counterposing Aristotle to it.¹⁰⁸ But the *comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* and later writings reveal another side to Bruni's Aristotelianism. One that illuminates the changing nature and character of Renaissance political thought.

¹⁰¹ On the popularity of the *Ethics*, see J. Hankins, 'Translation Practice in the Renaissance' in *Humanism and Platonism*, i, pp. 191–2. The figures are a distillation of J. Hankins, *Repertorium Brunianum: A Critical Guide to the Writings of Leonardo Bruni* (Rome, 1997). On Poliziano and Bruni, see J. Hankins, 'The *Ethics* Controversy' in *Humanism and Platonism*, i, pp. 218–19 and pp. 228–34.

¹⁰² Bruni, *Leonardus salutem dicit Nicolao* in *Epistolarium*, i, pp. 15–17 (1.8): 'Cuius ego libros si aliquando absolvero, et latinos, quemadmodum percupimus, effecero, nae, tu mi Nicolae, quicquid adhuc legisti, prae illius viri maiestate contemnes. Est enim in illo plurima urbanitas, summaque disputandi ratio, ac subtilitas, uberrimae divinaeque sententiae disputantium mirifica iocunditate, et incredibili dicendi copia referentur.'

¹⁰³ Bruni, *Prooemium in Gorgias* in L. Bertalot, 'Zur Bibliographie der Übersetzungen des Leonardus Brunus Aretinus', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 27 (1936–7), pp. 178–95 reprinted in *Studien*, ii, pp. 265–83, p. 269: 'Nam et de creatione mundi a vero et summo deo et de piorum impiorumque post mortem premiis penisque et aliis que fides nostra rectissime tradit, Plato ipse sic asseverat et probat, ut nostris disciplinis imbutus videatur. In moralibus vero talis est eius doctrina tamque salubris et integra, ut libros eius saepe dum lego, Petrum et Paulum praecepta vite tradentes me audire existime.'

¹⁰⁴ On Salutati and Plato, see R.P. Oliver, 'Plato and Salutati', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 71 (1940), pp. 315–34; J. Hankins, 'Salutati, Plato and Socrates' in C. Bianca (ed.), *Coluccio Salutati e l'invenzione dell'umanesimo* (Rome, 2010), pp. 283–93. On Chrysoloras and Plato, see G. Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini*, i, pp. 123–4. On Bruni and Plato, see J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, i, pp. 51–81.

¹⁰⁵ On the mixed constitution in Florentine political thought, see F. Gilbert, 'The Venetian Constitution in Florentine Political Thought' in N. Rubinstein (ed.), *Florentine Studies: Politics and Society in Renaissance Florence* (London, 1968), pp. 463–500. On the mixed constitution in medieval and Renaissance political thought more generally, see J.M. Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J., 1992).

¹⁰⁶ Compare Bruni, *Laudatio Florentinae urbis* in *Opere*, pp. 563–647 and Pier Candido Decembrio, *De laudibus mediolanensis urbis panegyricus* in A. Butti et al. (eds.), *Opuscula historica* (Bologna, 1925–58), 1014–25.

¹⁰⁷ On Decembrio's *De republica libri IV* as propaganda, see H. Baron, *Crisis*, pp. 425–7; J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, i, pp. 110–17.

¹⁰⁸ On Bruni, Aristotle, and Florence, see N. Rubinstein, 'Florentine Constitutionalism and Medici Ascendancy in the Fifteenth Century' in N. Rubinstein (ed.), *Florentine Studies*, pp. 442–62.

IV. THE COMPARATIO PLATONIS ET ARISTOTELIS

The Plato-Aristotle controversy was ignited in Renaissance political thought by Bruni with his *Vita Aristotelis* (*Life of Aristotle*) of 1429. Bruni wrote it arguably in response to Ambrogio Traversari's (1386–1439) translation of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* of 1424–33. Traversari's version aimed to cast pagan philosophers in an unfavourable light. Bruni's biography was probably meant to deflect that.¹⁰⁹ It came out after a highly popular version of Aristotle's *Oeconomics* of 1420 and a reworking of Polybius' *First Punic War* of around 1422, in a period Bruni spent mostly pouring over his *Historiarum florentini populi* (*History of the Florentine People*) of 1416–42.¹¹⁰ Bruni was a veteran biographer, having already translated some of Plutarch's *Lives* and produced a radically new *Vita Ciceronis* (*Life of Cicero*) in 1415. He was also a well-versed hagiographer, having portrayed Cicero in his aptly dubbed *Cicero Novus* (*New Cicero*) as the epitome of the scholar-statesman. 'The man,' Bruni writes, 'was really born to be useful to other men, either in the public sphere or in learning. As in the public sphere he served his country as consul and countless persons as orator, so in learning and letters he truly served not only his fellow citizens but in fact all who use the Latin language.'¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ On Bruni's *Vita Aristotelis*, see E. Fryde, 'The First Humanistic Life of Aristotle: The "Vita Aristotelis" of Leonardo Bruni' in P. Denley and C. Elam (eds.), *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honour of Nicolai Rubinstein* (London, 1988), pp. 285–96. On Bruni's *Vita Aristotelis* as a response to Traversari's version of Diogenes' *Lives*, see G. Ianziti, 'Leonardo Bruni and Biography: The "Vita Aristotelis"', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 55 (2002), pp. 805–32. On biographies of Aristotle more generally and for the text of Bruni's *Vita Aristotelis*, see I. Düring, *Aristotle and the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Göteborg, 1957).

¹¹⁰ On Bruni's *Oeconomics*, see J. Soudek, 'The Genesis and Tradition of Leonardo Bruni's Annotated Latin Version of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Economics*', *Scriptorium*, 12 (1958), pp. 260–8; J. Soudek, 'Leonardo Bruni and His Public: A Statistical and Interpretative Study of His Annotated Latin Version of the (Pseudo) Aristotelian *Economics*', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 5 (1968), pp. 49–136; J. Soudek, 'A Fifteenth-Century Humanistic Bestseller: The Manuscript Diffusion of Leonardo Bruni's Annotated Latin Version of the (Pseudo-)Aristotelian Economics' in P.O. Kristeller and E.P. Mahoney (eds.), *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honor of Paul Kristeller* (New York, N.Y., 1976), pp. 129–43. On Bruni's *De primo bello punico*, see G. Ianziti, 'Between Livy and Polybius: Leonardo Bruni on the First Punic War', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 51–2 (2006–7), pp. 173–97.

¹¹¹ Bruni, *Vita Ciceronis* in *Opere*, pp. 411–99, p. 468. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 184–90, p. 187. On Bruni's *Vita Ciceronis*, see E. Fryde, 'The Beginnings of Italian Humanist Historiography: The "New Cicero" of Leonardo Bruni', *The English Historical Review*, 95 (1980), pp. 533–52; H. Baron, 'Cicero and the Roman Civic Spirit in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 22 (1938), pp. 72–97 reprinted in H. Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism* (2 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1988), i, pp. 94–133, pp. 121–2; G. Ianziti, 'A Life in Politics: Leonardo Bruni's "Cicero"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61 (2000), pp. 39–58. On

Bruni begins his *Vita Aristotelis* by sketching out some of the details of Aristotle's life, from his birth in Stagira to his death in Chalcedon, borrowing the structure of Diogenes' *Life of Aristotle* but supplementing and revising it with information gleaned from other sources, such as Plutarch's *Life of Alexander*.¹¹² Born in a powerful and wealthy family, the son of the physician of Amyntas, king of Macedon and father of Philip, Aristotle was soon sent to Athens and at seventeen began to study under Plato at the Academy for the next twenty years. 'Such, indeed, was his thirst for knowledge that he became acquainted with every part of learning. He was remarkably quick-witted, diligent, and attentive'. He became proficient in all subjects, not least poetry, but eventually left Athens to return to Macedon. He went to Hermias, the tyrant of Atarneus, and spent three years at his court. He was then summoned to Macedon by Philip and entrusted with the education of his son Alexander.¹¹³ Thus, Aristotle was tutor to Alexander for ten years. But as Alexander set out for Asia, Aristotle returned to Athens and founded the Lyceum. 'His teaching', as Bruni relates, 'flourished for thirteen years in the Lyceum, and many of his students became distinguished men.' Sadly, 'because of the jealousy common among philosophers, he was accused of unorthodoxy in religion'. And afraid that he would suffer the same end as Socrates, 'he gave up his own defense and went away to Chalcedon, where he spent the rest of his life until his death'.¹¹⁴

The *comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* is a central element, both literally and figuratively, of the *Vita Aristotelis*. It stands between Bruni's sketch of Aristotle's life and the concluding list of Aristotelian works and forms the starting-point of the intellectual constituent of the biography. Bruni is less interested in Aristotle as a logician, metaphysician, and scientist than as a moral philosopher. He treads softly when it comes to Plato, but his position is clear.

Bruni's Plutarch, see G. Ianziti, 'The Plutarchan Option: Leonardo Bruni's Early Career in History, 1405–1414', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 8 (1999), pp. 11–35.

¹¹² Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* in *Lives*, ed. B. Perrin (11 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1914–26), vii, 7–8.

¹¹³ Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, ed. J.C. Rolfe (3 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1927), ii, 9.4: 'Filium mihi genitum scito. Quod equidem dis habeo gratiam, non proinde quia natus est, quam pro eo, quod nasci contigit temporibus vitae tuae. Spero enim fore ut eductus eruditusque a te, dignus existat et nobis et rerum nostrarum susceptione.'

¹¹⁴ Bruni, *Vita Aristotelis* in *Opere*, pp. 501–29, pp. 506–10. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 283–92, pp. 283–5.

Plato was, to be sure, an exceptional man who possessed a great variety and range of knowledge and an eloquence well-nigh superhuman. But his doctrines were occasionally such as to depend for their acceptance upon the assent of a well-disposed mind rather than upon necessary proofs. Much of what he taught about the nature of the soul and its transmigration and descent into bodies was more akin to revelation than to demonstration. In establishing his ideal state he expressed some opinions utterly abhorrent to our customs and ways of living. He believed, for instance, that all wives should be held in common – one can hardly imagine why – with the result that no one could tell his own children from those of a perfect stranger. He would do away with the laws of inheritance and have all things held in common. Aristotle opposed these and similar notions, and it was when he hit upon plausible counterarguments to them that he began to find followers, even though Plato was still alive.¹¹⁵

Not all wives are held in common in *Kallipolis*. Plato's so-called 'communism' is restricted to the Guardians of the city only. Bruni inherits Aristotle's misreading. Nevertheless, Bruni's central point that Aristotle, unlike Plato, 'gave support to normal usages and ways of life, instead of imagining strange, abhorrent, and unprofitable ones' is at issue here.¹¹⁶ The emphasis is on the obvious strength of Aristotle's realism over Plato's idealism.

By the time the *Vita Aristotelis* came out, Bruni had already begun working on a new version of the *Politics* at the behest of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (1390–1447).¹¹⁷ Humphrey's request came in the wake of the death of King Henry V (1387–1422), when he became Lord Protector to his very young nephew King Henry VI (1421–71) in whose education he had a stake. The idea that Humphrey requested the *Politics* less in order to fulfil some ideal of glory through patronage of the humanities than to instruct Henry VI in the art of statecraft is far from absurd.¹¹⁸ Humphrey soon after commissioned the Benedictine monk John Lydgate's (1370–1450) *Fall of Princes* of around 1431, a translation of a French adaption by Laurent Premierfait (1380–1418) of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* (*On the Fate of*

¹¹⁵ Bruni, *Vita Aristotelis*, pp. 518–20 and translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 288–9. See also Bruni, *Leonardus Nicolao Ceba* in *Epistolarium*, ii, pp. 147–9, p. 148: 'Sed multa sunt in iis libris abhorrentia a moribus nostris, quae pro honore Platonis tacere satius est, quam proferre'.

¹¹⁶ Bruni, *Vita Aristotelis*, p. 520 and translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 289.

¹¹⁷ Bruni, *Leonardus Duci Glocestriae* in Bruni, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino*, pp. 138–40. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 154–5.

¹¹⁸ On Humphrey and the Italian humanists, see A. Sammut, *Unfredo duca di Gloucester e gli umanisti italiani* (Padua, 1980); D. Rundle, 'Of Republics and Tyrants: Aspects of Quattrocento Humanist Writings and Their Reception in England, c. 1400–c. 1460', (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1997); S. Saygin, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (1390–1447) and the Italian Humanists* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 57–68; A. Petrina, *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England: The Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Leiden, 2004).

Famous Men) of around 1355 and *De mulieribus claris* (*On Famous Women*) of 1374 entitled *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes* (*On the Fate of Noble Men and Women*) of 1409 in which the vicissitudes of fortune of almost five hundred historical and mythical figures are discussed.¹¹⁹ Humphrey also later received Lapo da Castiglione's (1406–38) *Comparatio studiorum et rei militaris* (*Comparison between the Study of Letters and Military Matters*) of 1437 prefaced by a letter in which Castiglione remarked upon the value that his *Comparatio* might bring to Humphrey's young nephew Henry VI's education.¹²⁰

The idea that Bruni's *Vita Aristotelis* signalled a shift in reading the *Politics* from a work of political philosophy to a work of political theory finds ground in two virtually identical letters on the *Politics* sent from Bruni to Humphrey in 1437 and to Biondo for Pope Eugenius IV (1383–1447) in 1438. The actual *Praemissio quaedam ad evidentiam novae translationis Politicorum Aristotelis* (*Preface to the New Translation of Aristotle's Politics*) of 1437 is somewhat vague and clichéd. Bruni rehearses a familiar trope of Aristotelian political literature.

The more widely good is distributed, the more divine it must be. And since the human being is a feeble animal, and does not have sufficiency and perfection in himself, and must get this from civil society, certainly no branch of philosophy can be more appropriate to him than to know what a city is and what a republic is, and not to be ignorant of the causes by which civil society may be preserved or destroyed.¹²¹

Bruni in this case saw Aristotle's use of the past as just an oratorical flourish, an extension of the inherently rhetorical nature of politics. 'Certainly Aristotle filled these books with such eloquence, such variety and fullness, and illustrated them with such an abundance of

¹¹⁹ On Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, see L. Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 322–50; N. Mortimer, *John Lydgate's Fall of Princes: Narrative Tragedy in Its Literary and Political Contexts* (Oxford, 2005).

¹²⁰ Lapo da Castiglione, *Ad illustrissimum principem Humfridum ducem Gloucestrie* in Sammut, *Unfredo*, p. 165–7, p. 167: 'Mitto etiam cum hoc opusculo tres Isocratis, Atheniensis clarissimi rhetoris, orationes: in quarum una iuvenem quemdam ad virtutes instruit, quam tibi idcirco convenire putavi, quod tibi regis nepotis tui cura suscepta sit, quem ita erudire desideres, ut patri suo ac tibi simillimus sit; ex reliquis duabus, altera subditos adversus suum principem instruit, altera que principi precepta adversus subditos servand sint, continet, que quoniam nunc et regis locum pene obtineas, non iniocunde tibi esse debebunt.'

¹²¹ Bruni, *Praemissio quaedam ad evidentiam novae translationis Politicorum Aristotelis* in Bruni, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino*, pp. 73–4, p. 73. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 162–4, p. 162.

historical examples, that they seem to be written in an almost oratorical style.’¹²² The emphasis was far more on linguistic form than on philosophical content, eloquence rather than wisdom. Bruni was trying to vindicate his own translation of Aristotle against the earlier one by William of Moerbeke (1215–86) of around 1260.

Both letters to Humphrey and to Biondo linger considerably longer on the virtues of the *Politics* than the *Praemissio*. ‘I venture to say that there is no work in the Latin language – I am speaking of learned works – that should be preferred to this work of Aristotle’s for the importance of the subjects treated or for the authority of the writer,’ Bruni writes to Biondo.¹²³ Bruni outlines rather superficially the content of the first three books of the *Politics*. It is really the historical character of the next few books that astounds him. ‘Good God, what a succession of facts, what a variety and what an explanatory power is here demonstrated! Everything that has ever been achieved seems to have been known to this philosopher!’ he writes to both.¹²⁴ ‘Who would have thought’, he then adds to Biondo, ‘that a history of Italy was included in these books? Yet the account of King Italus, and of the Italy named after him, made me think I was reading a Latin history.’¹²⁵ He ends both letters by underlining again the historical character of the *Politics*.

It is really amazing that you cannot name a king of any distinction whose example and conduct are not described; no tyrant in Greece, Asia, Sicily or Italy whose life and conduct is not described, together with the methods by which he preserved his domination, and the length of time he managed it. On the other hand, where most often seditions and discords would occur, what were their origins, and what counsels and remedies against them may exist. There is in particular a long

¹²² Bruni, *Praemissio quaedam ad evidentiam novae translationis Politicorum Aristotelis*, p. 74 and translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 163. Bruni had already articulated this idea of strong bond between politics and rhetoric in his *De interpretatione recta* in *Opere*, p. 174: ‘In libris vero Politicorum multo crebrior est. Quod enim materia est civilis et eloquentie capax, nullus fere locus ab eo tractatur sine rhetorico pigmento atque colore, ut interdum etiam festivitatem in verbis oratoriam persequatur.’

¹²³ Bruni, *Leonardus Flavio Foroliviensis* in *Epistolarium*, ii, pp. 103–6, p. 105. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 159. On Bruni’s *Epistolarium*, see L. Gualdo Rosa, ‘La struttura dell’epistolario bruniano e il significato politico’ in P. Viti (ed.), *Leonardo Bruni cancelliere della repubblica di Firenze* (Florence, 1990), pp. 371–89; P. Viti, *Leonardo Bruni e Firenze: studi sulle lettere pubbliche e private* (Rome, 1992).

¹²⁴ Bruni, *Leonardus Flavio Foroliviensis*, ii, p. 105 and Bruni, *Illustrissimo a praestantissimo domino H. duci Gloucestriae et domino meo praecipuo* in A. Sammut, *Unfredo*, pp. 148–51, p. 150 translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 160.

¹²⁵ Bruni, *Leonardus Flavio Foroliviensis*, ii, p. 105 and translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, p. 160.

discussion of the location of a town of the region, of the size of the population, and of the discipline of the youth. But why should I go on? I feel I am being swept along by the wave as if I had gone to sea. I shall therefore turn around and return to these books as to the shore, where all these matters are divinely set forth.¹²⁶

Both letters unequivocally stress less Aristotle's political philosophy than his political theory. The emphasis is not on his discussion of what would be ideal but of what is real. There is, in fact, no mention of Aristotle's political philosophy in the narrow sense of the word. Bruni mentions Aristotle's analysis of tyranny and the dissolution of constitutions in Books 5 and 6, which are replete with historical examples, rather than the ideal city of Books 7 and 8, which are more analytical in nature.¹²⁷ The fact that Biondo was soon to begin working on his *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romani imperii decades III* (*Three Decades on the History of the Romans, Beginning with the Decline of Their Empire*) written between 1439 and 1453 may indeed have informed the content of the letters.¹²⁸ There is, of course, nothing about the historical and thus realist element of Aristotle's political thought in the covering letter to the Signori of Siena of 1438 other than what may be implied from Bruni's statement that the book is 'such a brilliant work, capable of being of the greatest usefulness to the rulers of republics (for its teaching is all to do with the ruling and governing of cities)'.¹²⁹ Little more can be said for the covering letter to Alfonso V, King of Aragon, (1396–1458) of 1441 other than the fact that Bruni mentions Aristotle's tutorship of Alexander the Great and writes that 'it is a valuable work to know for a knowledge of history. It is indeed a *summa* of the whole science of ruling and governing people, and there are infinite things in this book which can instruct, improve

¹²⁶ Bruni, *Leonardus Flavio Foroliviensis*, ii, pp. 105–6 and Bruni, *Illustrissimo a praestantissimo domino H. duci Gloucestriae et domino meo praecipuo*, pp. 150–1 and translated in Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 160–1.

¹²⁷ On the relationship between Books 4, 5, and 6, and Books 7 and 8 in Aristotle's *Politics*, see C. Rowe, 'Aims and Methods in Aristotle's *Politics*', *The Classical Quarterly*, 27 (1977), pp. 159–72. On Aristotle's utopianism, see R. Kraut, *Aristotle* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 192–239. For a more piercing criticism, see I. Berlin, 'The Pursuit of the Ideal' and 'The Decline of Utopian Ideas in the West' in *The Crooke Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, ed. H. Hardy (London, 1990), pp. 1–19 and pp. 20–48 respectively. For a more general expression of anti-utopian sentiments in modern political thought, see R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York, N.Y., 1974), pp. 293–334.

¹²⁸ On Biondo, see R. Fubini, 'Biondo, Flavio' in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, (Rome, 1960 –) x, s.v..

¹²⁹ Bruni, *Magnificis dominis Senensibus* in Bruni, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino*, p. 143. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 165–6, p. 166.

or impress the mind of a king'.¹³⁰ But both these letters to the Signori of Siena and Alfonso V do not detract from the fact that the letters to Humphrey and Biondo were evidence of a change in perceptions of Aristotle's *Politics*.

The idea that this new reading of Aristotle pointed to a wider shift in the nature and character of Renaissance political thought finds support in Bruni's *Historiarum*. Contrary to general opinion, Bruni's work is less a straightforward history than a sophisticated mirror-for-princes, the *Prooemium* of probably 1416 is rather explicit about this.¹³¹

It required long deliberation and many changes of mind before I decided to write about the deeds of the Florentine People, their struggles at home and abroad, their celebrated exploits in war and in peace. What attracted me was the greatness of the actions this People performed... These actions seemed to me very much worthy of record and remembrance, and I thought that acquaintance with them would serve both public and private ends. For if we think men of advanced years are wiser because they have seen more of life, how much greater is the wisdom history can give us if we read it carefully! For there the deeds and decisions of many ages may be scrutinized; from its pages we may learn with ease what behavior we should imitate and avoid, while the glory won by great men, as therein recorded, inspires us to perform acts of virtue.¹³²

The passage, much like Bruni's apology for the long gestation of the project, informs the reader of the pedagogical purpose of the history. 'It is not hard, with some effort, to write a slim volume or a letter. History, however, requires at once a long and connected narrative, causal explanation of each particular event, and the public expression of one's judgment about every issue'.¹³³ Bruni is open and clear about the fact that this is not just a simple

¹³⁰ Bruni, *Leonardus Regi Aragonum S.* in *Epistolarium*, ii, pp. 130–4, p. 133. All English translations are from Leonardo Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 166–8, p. 168.

¹³¹ On *Historiarum* as a mirror-for-princes, see J. Hankins, 'A Mirror for Statesmen: Leonardo Bruni's *History of the Florentine People*' at <http://dash.harvard.edu/handle/1/2958221> (accessed on 17 June 2015) and 'Leonardo Bruni and Machiavelli on the Lessons of the Florentine Histories', at https://www.academia.edu/23516059/Leonardo_Bruni_and_Machiavelli_on_the_Lessons_of_Florentine_History (accessed on 3 May 2016). On the *Historiarum* as a history book, see G. Ianziti, 'Bruni on Writing History', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 51 (1998), pp. 367–91. On Renaissance historiography more generally, see D.J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); E. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, Ill., 1981).

¹³² Bruni, *The History of the Florentine People*, ed. J. Hankins (3 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 2001–7), i, p. 3.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, i, p. 5.

chronicle like that of Giovanni (1275–1348), Matteo (*d.* 1363), and Filippo Villani (1325–1407).¹³⁴

The *Historiarum*'s character as an advice-book comes to the fore in the speech of 1399 Bruni ascribes to the Gonfaloniere Rinaldo Gianfigliuzzi (1335–1425). The oration was ostensibly given in response to the contemporary military threat posed by the Milan of Giangaleazzo Visconti and the perceived shortcomings of popular government.

The people and the mob do not look to the future and do not sense dangers until they actually occur; and outstanding men, if there are any among us involved in governing the state, although they may foresee dangers, nevertheless dare not and cannot forestall them. For so great is the freedom to calumniate in this city of ours that no sooner does someone explain the danger and advise taking action against it than many people start shouting that he is a warmonger and cannot bear peace, and they hedge him in with malicious laws and tie him up with a thousand difficulties and prohibitions. So even if someone wants to take precautions for the security of the republic, he is left no way to do it! Thus it happens that we flee from opportunities and do nothing.¹³⁵

The words of Pliny the Elder and others – ‘fortune favours the bold’ – in Pliny the Younger’s letter to Tacitus come to mind.¹³⁶ Gianfigliuzzi continues his long and compelling speech, setting out the need to curb the power, fear, and envy of the masses.

Let there be some vigilant persons in the state who have the power to act without being compelled to refer every single thing to the multitude and wait upon their decree. State affairs generally require swiftness and secrecy, things which are very much at odds with mass decision-making. Let the slanders and indictments of calumniators against great men cease. Let everyone understand the grave perils that threaten them and the great virtue and industry and expense it will require to ward them off. Only after these steps have been taken at home, I think, should we make provision for foreign affairs; let us provide ourselves with soldiers and a captain-general who may stand ready for our expeditions. We shall be more respected by both friends and enemies if they see we have

¹³⁴ On the Villani chronicles, see L.H. Green, *Chronicle into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine Fourteenth-Century Chronicles* (Cambridge, 1972). On the relationship between the *Historiarum* and the Villani chronicle, see B.L. Ullman, ‘Leonardo Bruni and Humanistic Historiography’, *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 4 (1946), pp. 45–61 reprinted in *Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 321–44; A.M. Cabrini, ‘Le “Historiae” del Bruni: risultati e ipotesi di una ricerca sulle fonti’ in P. Viti, *Leonardo Bruni cancelliere della repubblica di Firenze*, pp. 247–319.

¹³⁵ Bruni, *The History of the Florentine People*, iii, p. 243.

¹³⁶ Pliny the Younger, *Epistolarium*, ed. B. Radice (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1969), i, 6.16.12: “Fortis” inquit “fortuna iuvat...”.

sufficient power about us; if we lack such power, everyone will despise us. This is my general advice.¹³⁷

Bruni's views are strikingly Machiavellian. Prudence, boldness, swiftness, secrecy, and power are all essential attributes of politics that may be needed at times even at the expense of popular government.¹³⁸

The style and political ideas adopted and developed in the *Historiarum* are different from those in the *Politics*. Aristotle generally starts with a proposition and adduces examples to substantiate it whereas Bruni draws ostensibly impartial observations from equally ostensibly impartial accounts of history.¹³⁹ Unlike in the *Politics*, the narrative of events and political tenets are meshed together in the *Historiarum* by means of speeches that share with Aristotle only the use of medical metaphors. The speech by the Florentine magistrates to the Bolognese ambassadors in order to persuade them not to sign a deal with Milan in 1390 is emblematic.

The expenses of the war are very heavy indeed for everyone, but especially for citizen bodies and for a populace that does not discern the dangers that lie ahead. But just as doctors who cure the sick from time to time have to burn or cut and get rid of one part of the body to save the rest, so the governors of a state, like doctors, when they see a danger ahead must force their peoples to pay part of their resources, even if it is painful, in order to save other parts. For once liberty is lost, everything passes into the power of the victor, and in addition there is the disgrace and infamy, which are things to be rejected by men of noble spirit even at the cost of death.¹⁴⁰

Bruni's emphasis here is on liberty, a well-known Roman rather than Greek topos. Many of the political ideas expounded in the *Historiarum* are more Ciceronian than Aristotelian. This is exemplified in Pino della Tosa's (1280–1337) pro-imperial speech to the Florentine Signoria of 1329. Aristotle in the *Politics* deems conquest unlawful, but for Bruni there is much to be

¹³⁷ Bruni, *The History of the Florentine People*, iii, pp. 242–7.

¹³⁸ On the possible origins of this political realism, see G. Ianziti, 'Between Polybius and Livy', pp. 187–8. Bruni's ideal captain-general seems to be the Carthaginian Admiral Adherbal, see Bruni, *De primo bello punico* (Paris, 1512), fols. 14v–15r. Cf. Polybius, *The Histories*, ed. R. Waterfield and B. McGing (Oxford, 2010), pp. 1.49 and 1.52.

¹³⁹ On Bruni's use of the past, see G. Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy: Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012). On the manipulation of history more generally, see R. Sabbadini, *Il metodo degli umanisti* (Florence, 1922), pp. 75–86.

¹⁴⁰ Bruni, *The History of the Florentine People*, iii, pp. 128–31 (10.24).

had from ‘extending borders, enlarging empire, raising on high the glory and splendor of the state, assuring our own security and advantage’.¹⁴¹ Even the shift from political theory to exemplary practice reflects a move from Greek to Roman political thought.¹⁴²

There is no doubt that the political realism of the *Historiarum* was a product of the growing involvement of Bruni in the political life and fate of the city. He wrote the preface the year he became a citizen of Florence. Ten years later, in 1426, he became Ambassador to Pope Martin V (1369–1431). A year after that, he was elected Chancellor of Florence. He then became Counsellor and Consul to the Guild of Judges and Notaries. In 1439, he entered the war council *Dieci di Balìa* (Ten of War), which gave him access to secret documents, written for the most part by his predecessor Salutati, seminal to the later books of the *Historiarum*. His entire political life was a delicate balancing act, a walk on the tight-rope between factions, with exile, prison, or death under his feet.¹⁴³

Nevertheless, it would be naïve to ignore the connection between Bruni’s criticism of Plato and praise of Aristotle’s realism in his *Vita Aristotelis* and the approach to political thought adopted in the *Historiarum*, even more so in light of the two letters sent to Humphrey and Biondo. That is not to say that Aristotle was the catalyst for the change from doing political philosophy to doing political theory. That shift, once again, was most likely the product of Bruni’s steady involvement in Florentine politics. But the *Politics*, coupled with a new critical attitude towards sources visible as early as the *Cicero Novus* and *De primo bello punico libri III* of 1422, may have at least supplied the inspiration if not indeed the model of how to study politics. This model proved radically different from the scholastic practice of setting authorities against one another and deducing concepts from *a priori* principles. It echoed and indeed was an extension of the changing character of ethics in the Renaissance, from a

¹⁴¹ Ibid., ii, pp. 158–61. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. E. Barker and R.F. Stalley (Oxford, 1995), 1342b20–1325a16.

¹⁴² As James Hankins has kindly pointed out to me, in the *De militia* of around 1420 Bruni sees the contrast between Greek and Roman political thought as a contrast between political theory and exemplary practice, see Hankins, ‘Civic Knighthood in the Early Renaissance: Leonardo Bruni’s *De militia* (ca. 1420)’, *Noctua: International on-line Journal on the History of Philosophy*, 1 (2013), pp. 260–82.

¹⁴³ On Bruni’s life in office, see L. Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists*, pp. 165–76. On the political context of Bruni’s life, see J. Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200–1575* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 188–218 and pp. 278–306.

science of the universal and the necessary to a science of the particular and the contingent. It was also an extension of the revival of Greek studies in the West, which armed humanists with the necessary tools and confidence to free themselves from the tyranny of authorities and take a more liberal and critical stance to classical sources.

V. CONCLUSION

The move from political philosophy to political theory embodied by Bruni and adopted in the *Historiarum* in many ways foreshadows Machiavelli's own method of extracting maxims 'from a long experience in modern affairs and a continuous study of antiquity'.¹⁴⁴ The parallel between Bruni's own way of thinking about politics and Machiavelli's is particularly evident in the *Praefatio in commentaria rerum graecarum* (*Preface to the Commentary on The Hellenica*) to Bruni's friend Ambassador Angelo Acciaiuolo (*d.* 1467) of 1441.

I have sometimes noticed, Angelo, that you have been puzzled by my – shall I call it hesitation and slowness? – when there are deliberations about war, or about actions that might easily lead to war. If I do have such a tendency, however, I want you to know that it comes not so much from my nature as from the fact that the recollection and examples of things I have read have led me to dread all such contentions and perils. There has never been a state so wealthy and flourishing that it has not been obliged to face the gravest threat to its very existence as a consequence of what were sometimes minor mistakes. And some have even been brought to final ruin as a result. Accordingly, if we seemed hesitant and tardy – indeed timid and diffident in such matters, either to you or to others – know that the reason was that historical examples are always holding me back and frightening me away from every kind of confrontation.¹⁴⁵

To be sure, the Ciceronian idea of *historia magistra vitae* (history is life's teacher) also informed this approach.¹⁴⁶ But it was Aristotle's *Politics* and in particular his use of the past in his discussion of the dissolution of constitutions that showed how history could inform policy.

¹⁴⁴ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ Bruni, *Praefatio in commentaria rerum graecarum* in *Leonardo Bruni Aretino*, pp. 146–7. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, pp. 194–5, p. 194. On the *Commentaria* see G. Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 237–56.

¹⁴⁶ Cicero, *De oratore*, 2.36: 'Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia nisi oratoris immortalitati commendatur?'

This is especially noticeable in the context of the Plato-Aristotle controversy. Bruni highlights the practical nature of Aristotle's advice as opposed to the utopian character of Plato's political thought. It is unsurprising then to find that parallels between Aristotle and Machiavelli were frequently drawn in the Renaissance. Though, as we shall see in the next chapter, these parallels often centred on Aristotle's discussion of the means of preserving tyranny in Book 5 of the *Politics* and Machiavelli's advice on how to *mantenere lo stato* (how to maintain the state) in *The Prince*.

Part II

Machiavelli Aristotelian and the Tyranny of the Prince:

Niccolò Machiavelli

I. EARLY PARALLELS BETWEEN MACHIAVELLI AND ARISTOTLE

Oh Machiavelli you monstrous man, who from the eggs laid by Nero, Caligula, Commodus, and Severus, have hatched so many scorpions, basilisks, who bite, prick, poison, and therefore wound the soul of many today who distracted from all unity, order, peace, and religion, live without faith, without Christ, without God. Behold from your Tartarean grave, behold you wretch, what accursed results your pseudopolity has, what tragedies it brings about, what lamentations it everywhere creates.¹

John Case (1525–1600), *Sphaera civitatis* (1588).

Anti-Machiavellian invective was commonplace in early-modern Europe. Moralistic works of political theory were often imbued with it.² So by viewing Machiavelli's axioms as a threat to unity, order, peace, and religion in the Age of Astraea, Case, a fellow of St. John's College,

¹ John Case, *Sphaera civitatis* (Frankfurt, 1589), p. 57: 'O monstrum hominum Machiavelle, qui ex ovis a Nerone, Caligula, Commodo & Severo partis tot sis enixus scorpiones, tot Basiliscos, qui ita mordent, ita pungunt, ita inficiunt, vulnerantque animos multorum hodie ut ab omni unitate, ordine, pace, religione distracti sine fide, sine Christo, sine Deo vivant: vides in tartaro sepultus, vides nunc miser, quae eventa execranda tua pseudopolitia habeat, quas tragoedias moveat quos luctus ubique fecerit.' I quote from Dana F. Sutton's translation available at <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/sphaera/> (accessed 20 March 2015). On Case, see C.B. Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (Kingston, Ont., 1983). Nigel Bawcutt was the first to draw attention to Case's reading of Machiavelli in N.W. Bawcutt, 'Some Elizabethan Allusions to Machiavelli', *English Miscellany*, 20 (1969), pp. 53–74. It was then picked up by Schmitt in C.B. Schmitt, 'John Case and Machiavelli' in S. Bertelli and G. Ramakus (eds.), *Essays Presented to Myron P. Gilmore* (Florence, 1978), pp. 231–40. Therein Schmitt highlighted how Case's criticism was not confined to his *Sphaera civitatis*. References to Machiavelli can also be found in Case's *Thesaurus oeconomicae* (Oxford, 1597) and *Lapis philosophicus* (Oxford, 1599).

² On Machiavelli's reception, see G. Prezzolini, *Machiavelli, anticristo* (Rome, 1954); G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome, 1965); R. de Mattei, *Dal premachiavellismo all'anitmachiavellismo* (Florence, 1969); C. Dionisotti, *Machiavellerie: storia e fortuna di Machiavelli* (Turin, 1980); R. Bireley, *The Counter Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1990); S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: The First Century. Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance* (Oxford, 2005).

Oxford, was merely reciting the orthodoxy.³ His concerns about the Machiavellian epidemic he saw raging across England, especially in academic circles, offered little new to anti-Machiavellian discourse.⁴

There is, however, an intriguing element to Case's criticism, namely the choice of setting: an Aristotelian commentary on the *Politics*.⁵ To be sure, Aristotle's corpus was the core component of universities' syllabi in Elizabethan England and early-modern Europe more generally.⁶ So Machiavelli's presence on Case's Aristotelian stage was maybe less a conscious intention than a natural consequence of Case's academic context. On closer inspection, however, another motive arises. As Aristotle's political philosophy unfolds before our eyes, the image of Machiavelli as a subverter of Aristotelian philosophy gradually emerges: first, in book 3, with respect to ostracism – 'let us first hear Aristotle's syllogism,' Case writes, 'lest the Machiavellians appear to have sucked a contagious virus for the corruption and ruin of republics from here' – then, in book 5, with regard to tyranny:

I am of two minds whether it is better to write more about the preservation of tyranny than to say nothing about something so vile and perilous. It is better to write more, if I am to follow Aristotle, but I am afraid lest beneath his mask and cloak Machiavelli may have a laugh: this [passage on

³ I use the expression 'Age of Astraea' because of Case's contribution to the symbol of Elizabeth as Virgo-Astraea in the frontispiece of his *Sphaera Civitatis*, which shows the crowned figure of Queen Elizabeth holding a diagram of the Ptolemaic system, and the accompanying Latin poem; see F.A. Yates, 'Queen Elizabeth as Astraea', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 10 (1947), pp. 27–82, pp. 61–2.

⁴ Gabriel Harvey, *Letter-Book*, ed. E. Scott (London, 1884), pp. 79–80: 'and I warrant you sum good fellowes amongst us [in Cambridge] begin nowe to be prettely well acquayntid with a certayne parlous booke callid, as I remember me, Il Principe di Niccolo Machiavelli'. On Machiavelli in England, see M. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558–1642* (Oxford, 1959), p. 137; M. Praz, 'Machiavelli and the Elizabethans', *British Academy Proceedings*, 13 (1928), pp. 3–51; F. Rabb, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500–1700* (London, 1964). Cf. S. Anglo, 'The Reception of Machiavelli in Tudor England: A Re-Assessment', *Il Politico*, 31 (1966), pp. 127–38, which severely criticises Felix Rabb for plagiarising J.W. Horrocks, 'Machiavelli in Tudor Political Opinion and Discussion' (D.Litt. dissertation, University of London, 1908).

⁵ I use the term 'commentary' in the loose sense of the word. Case himself declares to Christopher Hatton that 'Aristoteles mihi auctor est, illum ut interpretes sequor: de republica suum inscripsit librum, sphaeram civitatis appello meum' in the preface to *Sphaera civitatis*. On the changes between medieval and Renaissance Aristotelian commentaries, see C.H. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries* (2 vols., Florence, 2005), i, p. xiv.

⁶ On Aristotle and Renaissance universities, see P.F. Grendler, 'The Universities of the Renaissance and Reformation', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 57 (2004), pp. 1–42; L.H. Brockliss, 'Curricula' in W. Rüegg (ed.), *A History of the University in Europe* (4 vols., Cambridge, 2003–11), i, pp. 563–620.

tyranny in the *Politics*] is, indeed, the source whence he imbibed his poison, whence he derived his fundamentals and principles, whence he acquired his prince or more correctly tyrant.⁷

Case treads softly on the subject of tyranny. But as the parallel between Machiavelli and Aristotle inevitably comes into sharper focus, he hastily draws a distinction between the two. Case is adamant: Aristotle and Machiavelli ‘did not drink the dregs from the same cup and did not describe these sordid republics with the same intention, since the former calls these republics defects while the latter good forms or constitutions and since the former calls those who rule in them the nation’s traitors, the latter good kings and rulers’.⁸ Ironically though, as we reach the peroration, the thought of this Phaethon, Machiavelli, as a reader of the *Politics* is etched in our minds.⁹

The idea of Machiavelli as reader of Aristotle was by no means original. It was first hinted at by the eclectic Renaissance Aristotelian philosopher Agostino Nifo (1473–1545) in his *De regnandi peritia* (*On the Art of Governing*) of 1523, a creative plagiarism and scholastic

⁷ Case, *Sphaera civitatis*, p. 152: ‘Quare ne contagiosum virus in tabem ac perniciem rerumpublicarum Machiavelliae ex hoc loco suxisse videantur, audiamus primum syllogismum.’ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. E. Baker (Oxford, 1998), 1283b25–1284b4. Case, *Sphaera civitatis*, p. 273: ‘Anceps hic sum, utrum melius sit de conservatione tyrannidis plura nunc scribere quam de re tam vili et periculosa penitus tacere; si Aristoteles sequar dicendum est, at vereor ne Machiavellus sub sua larva et pallio rideat: Hinc enim suum venenum hausit; hinc sua principia et fundamenta petiit, hinc suum principem vel potius tyrannum didicit.’

⁸ Ibid., p. 289: ‘Sed de hac re superius satis id ipsum inculcatum; nunc tamen volumus, ut Aristoteles et Machiavellum ex eodem cratere faeces non propinasse, et eodem animo has sordes rerumpublicarum non descripsisse cogitemus; cum ille ut labes, hic ut formas; cum ille in eis dominantes proditores patriae, hic vero reges bonos & politicos imperatores nominet.’

⁹ Ibid., p. 409: ‘Phaethontis id est Machiavelli, omniumque pseudopoliticorum & Atheorum currus indomitos & furentes equos (ne in malorum Oceanum praecipitemur) cito & procul fugiamus.’ This apocalyptic vision is strongly reminiscent of Reginald Pole’s *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum*. Unfortunately, no one has yet looked at the relationship between the two texts. See, however, P. van Dyke, ‘Reginald Pole and Thomas Cromwell: An Examination of the *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum*’, *The American Historical Review*, 9 (1904), pp. 696–724; P.S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 1–35. The image of Machiavelli as Phaethon, son of Helios, who lost control of his father’s chariot and would have destroyed the Earth by setting it ablaze had Zeus not intervened by killing him with a thunderbolt, appears to be unique and very interesting. Phaethon’s myth is related in Book 2 of Ovid, *Metamorphoseon*, ed. G.P. Goold and F.J. Miller (Cambridge, Mass., 1916). Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, ed. R. Waterfield (Oxford, 2008), 22C–D. As a figure of speech, however, Case’s reference to Machiavelli as a Phaethon may well have been inspired by Tiberius’ critique of Caligula in Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum*, ed. J.C. Rolfe and K.R. Bradley (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), 4.11: ‘Quod sagacissimus senex ita prorsus perspexerat, ut aliquotiens praedicaret exitio suo omniumque Gaium vivere et se nutricem populo Romano, Phaethontem orbi terrarum educare.’ Phaethon also features in Andrea Alciato’s influential *Emblematum liber* (Augsburg, 1531), D3r–v, where he embodies temerity in a strictly political sense: ‘Sic plerique rotis fortunae ad sydera Reges, | Evecti ambitio quos iuvenilis agit. | Post magnam humani generis clademque suamque, | Cunctorum poenas denique dant scelerum.’

remodelling of *The Prince*.¹⁰ Contrary to Case, Nifo never mentions the thought explicitly, plagiarism being what it is, namely passing off someone else's ideas as one's own. The Machiavellian debt, however, is obvious. So is the Aristotelian complexion of his advice-book. The use of Aristotelian tenets as fig leaves for Machiavelli's rudest axioms gently brings the two together, painting a very similar picture to the one later drawn by Case. Nowhere is this more evident than in the chapter on 'Whether a Prince Must Be Loved or Feared' of *De regnandi peritia*. Machiavelli had famously propounded in *The Prince* 'that one would like to be both, but since it is difficult to be both together, it is much safer to be feared than to be loved.'¹¹ Nifo bowdlerises this response. Quoting Aeacus's phrase in Cicero's *De officiis* (*On Duties*) 'let them hate as long as they fear', he remarks that

some say it is better and safer for a prince to be feared than to be loved... But if, indeed, it is impossible for the prince to be loved and feared at the same time, one must distinguish between king and tyrant. For if, on the one hand, it might be better for a tyrant to be feared, since the bond of fear is much stronger in tyrannies, on the other hand it is much better and honourable for the king to be loved, since the love of the subjects towards him is absolutely natural.¹²

The distinction between king and tyrant is borrowed from the *Politics* and unequivocally reveals, in Nifo's view, Machiavelli's prince as Aristotle's tyrant.

Of course, not all discussions of Aristotelian and Machiavellian thought drew parallels between the two. Machiavelli's exiled republican friend Antonio Brucioli (1498–1566)

¹⁰ On Nifo, see P. Tuozi, 'Agostino Nifo e le sue opere', *Atti e memorie della Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Padova*, n.s., 20 (Padua, 1903–4), pp. 63–86. On the *De regnandi peritia* as a plagiarism of *The Prince*, see G. Valletta, 'A proposito di un plagio di Agostino Nifo', *Lettere Italiane*, 3 (1951), pp. 65–82; G. Valletta, "Il "Principe" di Machiavelli e il "De regnandi peritia" di Agostino Nifo", *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia*, I (Naples, 1951), pp. 137–156; G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 3–26; S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: The First Century*, pp. 42–82. Ironically, Nifo's plagiarism was plagiarised in turn by Lucio Paolo Rosello in *Il ritratto del vero governo* of 1552. On Rosello, see A. del Col, 'Note biografiche su Lucio Paolo Rosello (ultimi decenni del secolo XV–1556)', *Bollettino della società di studi valdesi*, 97 (1976), pp. 109–19; S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: The First Century*, pp. 80–4.

¹¹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. P. Bondanella and M. Viroli (Oxford, 2005), pp. 57–8.

¹² Agostino Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, ed. S. Mercuri and P. Larvaille (Paris, 2008), pp. 281–2 (4.4): 'Respondent nonnulli esse regno melius ac longe tutius principem timeri quam amari... Si autem fieri non potest ut pariter princeps et ametur et timeatur, distinguendum esse arbitror regem a tyranno. Nam tyranno fortasse timeri tutius est, siquidem in tyrannide vinculum timoris firmius est quam amoris. Regi autem amari longe melius et honorabilius esse censemus; nam erga regem subditorum benivolentia naturalis admodum est.'

introduced Machiavelli's thought into an Aristotelian dialogue in the second edition of his *Dialogi della morale filosofia* (*Dialogues on Moral Philosophy*) of 1537–8 in order to stress the ideological differences between Aristotelian and neo-Roman political thought.¹³ The *Dialogo della repubblica* (*Dialogue on the Republic*) is centred on the *Politics*, but Aristotle had argued something at odds with Brucioli's and Machiavelli's republicanism, namely that a city must curb citizenship in order to remain orderly. The theory of liberty that Brucioli espouses sees liberty as a state of non-domination and freedom from arbitrary rule and holds expansion as a necessary condition for its existence. But expansion requires integration and integration entails citizenship. Thus Brucioli rejects Aristotle's exclusivism for Machiavelli's inclusivism, and does so with typical humanist irony, that is by tacitly putting Aristotle's words into Machiavelli's mouth and vice versa.

Niccolò. It is a very good thing that which in our times exists in a republic [Venice], namely that foreigners, subjects, or inhabitants are excluded from power, which therefore remains in the hands of the same number of houses that were established in ancient times, without caring to increase their number...¹⁴

M. Giangiorgio. Following Rome's example, we should seek, by love or force, to include into our city those nearby towns that are no more than fifty miles away, making its people our citizens, since the greatness of republics resides in their great number.¹⁵

¹³ On Brucioli, see G. Spini, *Tra rinascimento e riforma* (Florence, 1940). On the relationship between Brucioli and Machiavelli, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 27–43; C. Dionisotti, *Machiavellerie*, pp. 193–226; D. Fachard, 'Entre utopie et réalité: Antonio Brucioli et la leçon machiavélique' in É. Boillet (ed.), *Antonio Brucioli. Humanisme et évangélisme entre réforme et contre-réforme* (Paris, 2008), pp. 77–97.

¹⁴ Antonio Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. A. Landi (Chicago, Ill., 1982), pp. 118–9: '*Niccolò*. E per questo modo facendo, benissimo sarebbe costituito in quello, che in questi nostri tempi è in alcuna repubblica, che a nessuno de' forestieri o de' sudditi o di quegli che abitano la loro città, danno l'adito a venire del loro governo, restandosi in quel numero di case che anticamente statuirno che avessi a governare la città e lo stato, non si curando di accrescerle in maggiore quantità. Né ancora sarebbe per questa medesima causa se non buona la loro opinione di non armare loro né il loro popolo e sudditi, acciò che per la grandezza che seco apportano le venditrici armi, non ne conseguino qualche cattivo sinistro che turbi la loro libertà, causato o dal timore degli altri potentati, temendo che tale potenza non cresca in loro danno, o dalla ambizione de' capitani e insolenza de' militi.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1319b1–18.

¹⁵ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 142: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Anzi vi dico di più, che con l'esempio di Roma si dovrebbe cercare, o per amore o per forza, che quegli delle circumvicine città che non fussino discosto più di cinquanta miglia, venessino a abitare nella tua, facendone partecipi della cittadinanza, essendo la grandezza delle repubbliche il gran numero de' cittadini e del popolo.'

The irony does not simply entertain; it informs. It highlights the different conceptions of *vivere politico* (political life) held by Aristotle and Machiavelli.¹⁶

Most discussions of Aristotle and Machiavelli in the Renaissance, however, stressed an affinity between the two. The Venetian scholar and civil lawyer Francesco Sansovino (1521–86) paired Aristotle’s *Politics* and Machiavelli’s *The Prince* against Plato’s *Republic* and Baldassare Castiglione’s (1478–1529) *Il cortegiano* (*The Courtier*) of 1528 in his *Dialogo della pratica della ragione* (*Dialogue on the Practice of Reason*) of 1538–42.¹⁷ The dialogue is, for the most part, a loose translation of the medieval jurist and post-glossator Bartolus of Sassoferrato’s (1313–57) *Tractatus de ordine iudiciorum* (*Treatise on the Order of the Courts*) of around 1350 and *Tractatus testimoniorum* (*Treatise on Witnesses*) of 1355. Sansovino, however, goes on a tangent in the second half of the *Dialogo* and mentions Plato and Castiglione in a discussion about princely prudence and Aristotle and Machiavelli in reference to republics.¹⁸ The ideas he summarises are, in fact, borrowed from Bartolus’ *Tractatus de regimine civitatis* (*Treatise on the Government of Cities*) of 1355.¹⁹ But Bartolus’ discussion, in turn, owes a debt to Giles of Rome’s (1243–1316) scholastic *De regimine principum* (*On the Rule of Princes*) of around 1280.²⁰

¹⁶ On the different conceptions of *vivere civile* in Brucioli, see M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250–1600* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 201–9.

¹⁷ On Sansovino, see P.F. Grendler, ‘Francesco Sansovino and Italian Popular History, 1560–1600’, *Studies in the Renaissance*, 16 (1969), pp. 139–80. Giuliano Procacci only really mentions Sansovino’s *Concetti politici* of 1578, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 320–6. His discussion owes much to V. Luciani, ‘Sansovino’s *Concetti politici* and Their Debt to Machiavelli’, *PMLA*, 67 (1952), pp. 823–44.

¹⁸ Francesco Sansovino, *Dialogo della pratica della ragione* in L. Sartorello, *Le due repubbliche: Bartolo e Machiavelli in un dialogo inedito di Francesco Sansovino* (Florence, 2010), pp. 154–5. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 157–60.

¹⁹ Bartolus of Sassoferrato, *Tractatus de regimine civitatis* in D. Quaglione, *Politica e diritto nel trecento italiano: il ‘De tyranno’ di Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1314–57) con l’edizione critica dei trattati ‘De Guephis et Gebellinis’, ‘De regimine civitatis’ e ‘De tyranno’* (Florence, 1983), pp. 147–70 (2.296–2.400).

²⁰ Bartolus, *Tractatus de regimine civitatis*, p. 153 (2.80–2.90): ‘Secundo videndum est quis sit melior modus regendi. Hec investigatio necessaria est iuristis, quoniam domini universales dum de reformatione civitatis tractant, vel iuristas consulunt, vel eis committunt, vel cum ipsi assident apud eos de regimine civitatis querela proponitur. Quis ergo sit melior regendi modus investigandum est. Quod tractat Aristoteles iii. Politicorum; sed clarius tractat Egidius Romanus, de ordine Heremitarum sancti Augustini, in libro quem fecit De regimine principum, qui fuit magnus philosophus et in theologia magister.’

The historian and literary figure Bernardo Segni (1504–58) was the first to draw an explicit parallel between Machiavelli and Aristotle in his *Trattato dei governi di Aristotile* (*Treatise on Governments by Aristotle*) of 1549, an Italian translation of the *Politics*.²¹

Having spoken of the corruption and preservation of all States, the Philosopher in this chapter discusses the corruption of Monarchies, explaining first the origins of Tyranny and Kingship and their different ends and the causes for their ruination, arguing that these are the same as those in other States – and the reason is that Kingship and Tyranny originate from other States. After this he discusses conspiracies, in how many ways and for what reasons they are carried out against Princes and says many noteworthy things to these Princes, whence Machiavelli has lifted a good portion of his book on *The Prince*, there being, among other things, also a discussion of conspiracies made by those who conspire against Princes in order to attain glory, against whom the Princes can only protect themselves with difficulty since these conspirators have no concern for their own lives says the Philosopher.²²

Segni drew another parallel later in his commentary to his *L'Ethica di Aristotile* (*The Ethics of Aristotle*) of 1550, an Italian translation of the *Ethics*. Talking of prodigality, Segni remarked that ‘our Machiavelli in his discourse on *The Prince* claims avarice to be a lesser evil than prodigality, I say, because maybe there are some Princes that are prodigal and so take away what belongs to others – being able to do what they want, which private citizens cannot – and thus the prodigal Prince comes to hurt the people more than the avaricious Prince’.²³

²¹ On Segni’s life, see M. Lupo Gentile, *Studi sulla storiografia fiorentina alla corte di Cosimo I de’ Medici* (Pisa, 1905), pp. 1–94. On Segni and Machiavelli, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 47–50.

²² Bernardo Segni, *Trattato dei governi di Aristotile* (Florence, 1549), p. 290: ‘Doppo che’l Filosofo ha trattato delle corrutioni, et salvationi di tutti gli Stati, tratta egli in questo Cap[itolo] delle corrutioni delle Monarchie; mostrando imprima il nascimento della Tirannide, et del Regno, et la diversita de’ lor’ fini, et delle cagioni, che rovinano amendue questi Principati: affermando essere le medesime, che negli altri Stati. Et la ragione è, perché il Regno, et la Tirannide son’ generati dagli altri Stati. Doppo questo tratta delle congiure in quanti modi elle si fanno, et per quante cagioni contra i Principi; et dice molte cose degne da esser notate, et avvertite da loro: delle quali buona parte n’ha tolto di qui il Machiavello nel suo lib[ro] del Principe. Essendovi infra l’altre notata anchor’ quella di coloro, che congiurano contra li Principi, per acquistar’ gloria. Da’ quali afferma il Filosofo con difficoltà potersi guardare i Principi, perchè tali congiuranti non si curano di vivere.’

²³ Segni, *L’Ethica d’Aristotile* (Florence, 1550), p. 180: ‘[Per la qual ragione i Principi non debbon’ esser’ chiamati prodigi] È vero il detto non assolutamente, a in comparatione de’ privati; perchè anchor’ de’ Principi si sono alcuna volta trovati, che prodigalissimamente hanno consumato le loro entrate. Onde il nostro Machiavello nel suo discorso del Principe mette per manco male nel Principe l’avaritia che la prodigalità, io dico, perché forse si ritrova de’ Principi, che son’ prodigi, et per esser’ tali tolgono la roba d’altrui; potendo essi far’ ciò, che e’ vogliono; il che non può fare chi è in privata fortuna: onde e’ vien’ per tal verso forse quel Principe prodigo più ad offendere i popoli che non fa il Principe avaro.’ Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1119b20–1121a10; Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 24–5. On Segni’s *Ethica*,

In France, the Professor of the Collège Royale Louis Le Roy (1510–77) echoed Segni's thoughts on Aristotle and Machiavelli in his *Les Politiques d'Aristote* (*The Politics of Aristotle*) of 1568, a French translation of the *Politics*.²⁴ Commenting on Aristotle's discussion of the means of preserving tyrannies he remarked that 'the Florentine Machiavelli, writing on *The Prince*, has taken from this passage most of his instructions, adding Roman and Italian examples.'²⁵ Le Roy went on to criticise Aristotle for his zeal. 'Aristotle seems to have been too curious towards deducing tyrannical methods since bad princes are sufficiently inclined of their own to invent whatever they need for their own greatness and security without there being books to teach them,' he writes. 'Machiavelli, in writing *The Prince*, has taken from here, as I said, the main principles of this institution, which must be read with great discretion, since they were written by an author with no conscience, and no religion, looking only for earthly power and glory, and who deceived many people.'²⁶ Thus Le Roy examines the subject no further, citing Tacitus by way of Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy* of 1531 that 'men must honour past affairs and endure the present, and that they should desire good princes, but, regardless of what they are like, should tolerate them in order to obviate, inasmuch as it is possible, the disorders brought about by change'.²⁷

By the seventeenth century, the idea of Machiavelli as a reader of the *Politics* proved popular throughout Europe. The English Jesuit Thomas Fitzherbert (1552–1640) drew a

see D. Lines, 'Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism: Bernardo Segni's *Ethica*, the Florentine Academy, and the Vernacular in Sixteenth-century Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 66 (2013), pp. 824–65.

²⁴ On Le Roy, see W. Gundersheimer, *The Life and Works of Louis Le Roy* (Geneva, 1966); A. Becker, *Un humaniste au XVI^e siècle: Loys Le Roy* (Paris, 1986); E. Sciacca, *Umanesimo e scienza politica nella Francia del XVI secolo: Loys Le Roy* (Florence, 2007). On Le Roy and Machiavelli, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 50–65 and pp. 117–20.

²⁵ Louis Le Roy, *Les Politiques d'Aristote: esuelles est monstrée la science de gouverner le genre humain en toutes espee d'estats publics* (Paris, 1568), p. 788: 'Machiavel Florentin escrivant du Prince, a tiré de ce passage la plus part de ses instructions, en y adioustant exemples romains et italiens.'

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 789: 'Aristote semble avoir esté trop curieux en la deduction des moyens tyranniques, pourtant que les mauvais princes sont assez enclins d'eulz mesmes à inventer ce qui sert à leur grandeur et seureté, sans qu'il soit besoing les instruire par livres. Machiavel formant son Prince, a tiré d'icy, comme i'ay dit, les principaux fondemens de telle institution, qui doit estre leuë avec grande discretion, pour estre escrite par un autheur sans conscience, et sans religion, regardant seulment à la puissance et gloire mondaine, qui deçoit beaucoup de gens.' Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1313a34 – 1315b10.

²⁷ Le Roy, *Les Politiques d'Aristote*, p. 789–90: 'Mais nous... passerons ces discours, concludans avec Corneille Tacite, que les hommes ont à honnorer les choses passées, et obeir aux presentes, et qu'ilz doyent desirer les bons princes: et quelz qu'ilz soyent, les tolerer et comporter, à fin d'obvier tant qu'il est possible, aux desordres advenans par les mutations.' Cf. Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, J.C. and P. Bondanella (Oxford, 1997), pp. 256–7 (3.6); Tacitus, *Historiarum*, ed. C.H. Moore, (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 4.8.2.

similar parallel to Case's in *The First Part of a Treatise Concerning Policy and Religion...* of 1606. 'Can *Macchiavel*, or any other politike,' he wondered, 'teach more to this purpose, then we fynd written... by *Aristotle* in his politikes, who shewing the meanes whereby tyrants seeke to preserve them selves, and their states, ministreth to *Macchiavel* and his followers al the matter, and substance of their wicked policies?'²⁸ The question is rhetorical and the answer is no. The similarities with Case are obvious. For Fitzherbert, Aristotle observed these means whereas Machiavelli advocated them. Following in his footsteps, we later see written in the margin of Fitzherbert's *Treatise* that 'Macchiavellian policy [is] contrary to Aristotles doctrine and experience'. Aristotle 'declareth how unsure tyranny is,' Fitzherbert explains, 'and exemplyfyeth the same in al the tyrannical states, which had been before, or in his tyme, shewing how speedily they al perished'.²⁹

The parallel soon extended beyond Aristotle to include his scholastic followers. The German scholar Kaspar Schoppe (1576–1649) brought Thomas Aquinas (1225–74) into the picture in his *Paedia politices* (*Political Instructions*) of 1623, a distillation of his more substantial albeit virtually unknown *Machiavellica* of 1618.³⁰ The Italian poet and philosopher Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) did so too in his *De gentilismo non retinendo* (*On that Paganism that Must Not Be Maintained*) of 1636. 'From who else other than Aristotle, Averroes, Alexander of Aphrodisias and their followers could Machiavelli have got the idea that religion is but the art of governing, laws the impostures of clever men with no scruples, and that God does not care

²⁸ Thomas Fitzherbert, *The first part of a treatise concerning policy, and religion* (Douai, 1606), p. 384. The earliest reference in modern scholarship to Fitzherbert as a reader of Machiavelli is in L.A. Burd, 'Introduction' in Machiavelli, *Il principe*, ed. L.A. Burd (Oxford, 1891), pp. 58–9. On Fitzherbert's ideas in the context of Jesuit political thought, see H. Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c. 1540–1630* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 125–31.

²⁹ Fitzherbert, *Treatise Concerning Policy and Religion*, p. 385. Case made the same point about the lifespan of tyrannies, see John Case, *Sphaera Civitatis*, p. 272: '...ut probemus tyrannidem diuturnam esse non posse: nam si maxime omnium a studio boni communis desciverit, diu constare non potest, quippe salus reipublicae in studio virtutis, pernicies in malorum colluvione ponitur.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1315b39. On Machiavelli and Fitzherbert, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 55–6.

³⁰ Kaspar Schoppe, *Paedia politices* (Rome, 1623), p. 42: 'Si enim appareat, id, quod toto libro habuit propositum, laudem mereri, neque utilitatibus humani generis disconducere, idque quod de vitiosi Principatus conservandi modis praecipit, aut impediendi, aut emendandi eiusdem Principatus vim habere: non magis eum, quam aut Aristotelem aut D. Thomam, imprudentiae accusare possis, quando eum istorum cum praeceptis, tum exemplo congruenter de repub[lica] disputare cumulatissime demonstravimus.' Schoppe never mentions Machiavelli explicitly but, insofar as his *Paedia politices* is a distillation of his *Machiavellica*, the parallel is obvious. On Schoppe, see M. D'Addio, *Il pensiero politico di Gaspare Scioppo e il machiavellismo del Seicento* (Milan, 1962).

about mankind and the world?’³¹ The French librarian Gabriel Naudé (1600–53) echoed Campanella’s thoughts in his *Considérations politiques sur les coups d’état* (*Political Considerations on State Coups*) of around 1639, arguing that there is little difference between Aquinas and Machiavelli or Girolamo Cardano (1501–76).³²

The riddle of Machiavelli’s sources has long exercised modern scholars. From Georg Ellinger’s *Die antiken Quellen der Staatslehre Machiavelli’s* of 1888 to Gennaro Sasso’s *Machiavelli e gli antichi* of 1987–97 the puzzle continues to elicit literature.³³ Historians of recent times,

³¹ Tommaso Campanella, *De gentilismo non retinendo* (Paris, 1636), p. 20: ‘A quo enim Machiavellus didicit religionem esse artem regnandi et leges imposturas astutorum, Deum humana non curare nisi ab Aristotele, Averro, Alexandro Aphrodisiae et horum sequacibus’. On Campanella, see primarily L. Firpo, *Ricerche Campanelliane* (Florence, 1947); A. Corsano, *Tommaso Campanella* (Bari, 1961); J.M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton, N.J., 1997).

³² Gabriel Naudé, *Considérations politiques sur les coups d’État*, ed. F. Marin and M.O. Perulli (Paris, 1989), pp. 77–8. See Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In libros Politicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. R. Spiazzi (Turin, 1951), liber 5, lectio 11.4 and 12.6.

³³ G. Ellinger, ‘Die antiken Quellen der Staatslehre Machiavellis’, *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, 44 (1888), pp. 1–58; F. Mehmel, ‘Machiavelli und die Antike’, *Antike und Abendland*, 3 (1948), pp. 152–86; G. Sasso, *Machiavelli e gli antichi e altri saggi* (4 vols., Milan, 1987–97). On Machiavelli and Cicero, see M. Colish, ‘Cicero’s *De Officiis* and Machiavelli’s *Prince*’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 9 (1978), pp. 80–93; J.N. Stephens, ‘Ciceronian Rhetoric and the Immorality of Machiavelli’s *Prince*’, *Renaissance Studies*, 2 (1988), pp. 258–67; J.J. Barlow, ‘The Fox and the Lion: Machiavelli Replies to Cicero’, *History of Political Thought*, 20 (1999), pp. 627–45; T.J. Lukes, ‘Lionizing Machiavelli’, *American Political Science Review*, 95 (2001), pp. 561–75; M. Zerba, ‘The Frauds of Humanism: Cicero, Machiavelli, and the Rhetoric of Imposture’, 22 (2004), pp. 215–40; W. Olmsted, ‘Exemplifying Deliberation: Cicero’s *De Officiis* and Machiavelli’s *Prince*’ in W. Jost and W. Olmsted (eds.), *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Malden, Mass., 2004), pp. 173–89; G. Remer, ‘Rhetoric as a Balancing of Ends: Cicero and Machiavelli’, *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 42 (2009), pp. 1–28; D.J. Kapust, ‘Acting the Princely Style: *Ethos* and *Pathos* in Cicero’s *On the Ideal Orator* and Machiavelli’s *The Prince*’, *Political Studies*, 58 (2010), pp. 590–608; A.S. Duff, ‘Republicanism and the Problem of Ambition: The Critique of Cicero in Machiavelli’s *Discourses*’, *The Journal of Politics*, 73 (2011), pp. 980–92. On Machiavelli and pseudo-Cicero, see V. Cox, ‘Machiavelli and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: Deliberative Rhetoric in *The Prince*’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28 (1997), pp. 1109–1141. On Machiavelli and Homer, see J.H. Geerken, ‘Homer’s Image of the Hero in Machiavelli: A Comparison of *Aretē* and *Virtù*’, *Italian Quarterly*, 13–14 (1969–70), pp. 45–89. On Machiavelli and Frontinus, see N. Wood, ‘Frontinus as a Possible Source for Machiavelli’s Method’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 28 (1967), pp. 243–8. On Machiavelli and Isocrates, see R. Hariman, ‘Composing Modernity in Machiavelli’s *Prince*’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50 (1989), pp. 3–29; On Machiavelli and Livy, see J.H. Whitfield, ‘Machiavelli’s Use of Livy’ in T.A. Dorey (ed.), *Livy* (London, 1971), pp. 73–96; B. Richardson, ‘Notes on Machiavelli’s Sources and His Treatment of the Rhetorical Tradition’, *Italian Studies*, 26 (1971), pp. 24–48; H.C. Mansfield, Jr., *Machiavelli’s New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1979); R.T. Ridley, ‘Machiavelli’s Edition of Livy’, *Rinascimento*, 27 (1987), pp. 327–41. On Machiavelli and Lucretius, see C.E. Finch, ‘Machiavelli’s Copy of Lucretius’, *The Classical Journal*, 56 (1960), pp. 29–32; S. Bertelli, ‘Notarelle Machiavelliane: un codice di Lucrezio e di Terenzio’, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 73 (1961), pp. 544–53; S. Bertelli, ‘Ancora su Lucrezio e Machiavelli’, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 76 (1964), pp. 774–92; P. Rahe, ‘In the Shadow of Lucretius: The Epicurean Foundations of Machiavelli’s Political Thought’, *History of Political Thought*, 28 (2007), pp. 30–55; P. Rahe, *Against Throne and Altar: Machiavelli and Political Theory under the English Republic* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 32–9; J. Barthas, ‘Au fondement intellectuel de l’irreligion machiavélienne, Lucrèce?’ in D. Foucault and J.P. Cavaillé (eds.), *Sources antiques de l’irreligion moderne* (Toulouse, 2001), pp. 67–90; A. Brown, *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010), pp. 68–87. On Machiavelli and Polybius, see J.H. Hexter, ‘Seyssel, Machiavelli, and Polybius VI: The Mystery of the Missing Translation’, *Studies in the Renaissance*, 3 (1956), pp. 75–96; A.

however, have somewhat forgotten the most immediate parallel that contemporaries or near-contemporaries of Machiavelli often drew, that is between *The Prince* and the *Politics*.³⁴ The neglect is, on the one hand, of Machiavelli's own making. As we shall see, his self-professed reliance on reason rather than authority leads him to dismiss classical sources, not least Aristotle. On the other hand, ever since Delio Cantimori illuminated the intellectual context of Machiavelli's political thought,³⁵ scholars such as Felix Gilbert, John Pocock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli have shared a tendency to treat *The Prince* as both an example of and a reaction against the humanist mirror-for-princes genre.³⁶ Humanist political thought

Momigliano, 'Polybius' Reappearance in Western Europe' in F.W. Walbank and E. Gabba (eds.), *Polybe* (Vandœuvres and Geneva, 1974), pp. 345–72 reprinted in A. Momigliano, *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Rome, 1980), pp. 103–23; J.P. McCormick, 'Addressing the Political Exception: Machiavelli's "Accidents" and the Mixed Regime', *The American Political Science Review*, 87 (1993), pp. 888–900; C.J. Nederman and M.E. Sullivan, 'The Polybian Moment: The Transformation of Republican Thought from Ptolemy of Lucca to Machiavelli', *The European Legacy*, 17 (2012), pp. 867–81. On Machiavelli and Sallust, see P.J. Osmond, 'Sallust and Machiavelli: From Civic Humanism to Political Prudence', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 23 (1993), pp. 408–38; P.J. Osmond, 'Principes Historiae Romanae: Sallust in Renaissance Political Thought', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 40 (1995), pp. 101–43; B. Fontana, 'Sallust and the Politics of Machiavelli', *History of Political Thought*, 24 (2003), pp. 86–108; D. Kapust, 'Cato's Virtues and the Prince: Reading Sallust's *War with Catiline* with Machiavelli's *The Prince*', *History of Political Thought*, 28 (2007), pp. 433–48. On Machiavelli and Seneca, see N. Wood, 'Some Common Aspects of the Thought of Seneca and Machiavelli', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 21 (1968), pp. 11–23; P. Stacey, *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 207–316. On Machiavelli and Tacitus, see G. Toffanin, *Machiavelli e il tacitismo* (Padua, 1921); K.C. Schellhase, 'Tacitus in the Political Thought of Machiavelli', *Il Pensiero Politico*, 4 (1971), pp. 381–91; K.C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago, Ill., 1976), pp. 66–126. On Machiavelli and Thucydides, see M. Palmer, 'Machiavellian Virtù and Thucydidean Areté: Traditional Virtue and Political Wisdom in Thucydides', *The Review of Politics*, 51 (1989), pp. 365–85. On Machiavelli and Xenophon, see W.R. Newell, 'Machiavelli and Xenophon on Princely Rule: A Double-Edged Encounter', *The Journal of Politics*, 50 (1988), pp. 108–30. On Machiavelli and Plato, Plutarch, Thucydides, and Xenophon, see E. Benner, *Machiavelli's Ethics* (Princeton, N.J., 2009); E. Benner, *Machiavelli's 'Prince': A New Reading* (Oxford, 2014).

³⁴ There are, of course, modern analyses of Machiavelli and Aristotle, see G. di Napoli, 'Niccolò Machiavelli e l'aristotelismo del Rinascimento', *Giornale di metafisica*, 25 (1970), pp. 215–64 reprinted in his G. di Napoli, *Studi sul Rinascimento* (Naples, 1973), pp. 161–244; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J., 1975); C. Orwin, 'Machiavelli's Unchristian Charity', *The American Political Science Review*, 72 (1978), pp. 1217–28; J.F. Tinkler, 'Praise and Advice: Rhetorical Approaches in More's *Utopia* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), pp. 187–207; M. Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 205–227; P. Pasquino, 'Machiavelli e Aristotele: le anatomie della città', *Filosofia politica*, 21 (2007), pp. 199–212. However, these analyses are small drops in an ocean of literature and many of them have been or can be severely criticised, see V. Sullivan, 'Machiavelli's Momentary 'Machiavellian Moment': A Reconsideration of Pocock's Treatment of the Discourses', *Political Theory*, 20 (1992), pp. 309–18; V. Cox, 'Machiavelli and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*'. Clifford Orwin explores Machiavelli's thought primarily in relation to Aristotle's *Ethics*. Mikael Hörnqvist juxtaposes *The Prince* to the *Politics* only superficially. Pasquale Pasquino concentrates solely on Machiavelli's and Aristotle's idea of the *polis*.

³⁵ D. Cantimori and F.A. Yates, 'Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 1 (1937), pp. 83–102.

³⁶ F. Gilbert, 'The Humanist Concept of the Prince and *The Prince* of Machiavelli', *The Journal of Modern History*, 11 (1939), pp. 449–83 reprinted in Gilbert, *History: Choice and Commitment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 91–114; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political*

has since been labelled a distinctively Roman ideology and interpretations of Machiavelli's advice-book have focused less on its political theory than on its rhetorical elements.³⁷ Thus Aristotelian readings of Machiavelli have been eclipsed.

My intention in the rest of this chapter is to examine why Renaissance readers often felt compelled to draw ties between *The Prince* and the *Politics*. I will do so by using one of the most famous early-modern criticisms of Machiavelli and by focusing on Machiavelli's portrait of the prince and Aristotle's picture of the tyrant, since that was the parallel most frequently drawn between the two. Part of the answer can be gleaned from Allan H. Gilbert's *Machiavelli's Prince and Its Forerunners* of 1938.³⁸ His book offers a useful glimpse into the Aristotelian-scholastic elements of Machiavelli's advice-book. However, I disagree with Gilbert's assessment of *The Prince* as a typical book *De regimine principum*. Machiavelli's axioms share as much ground with the scholastic and Renaissance *De tyranno* books, which Gilbert ignores, as with the medieval and Renaissance mirror-for-princes. Moreover, whereas Gilbert's focus centres on the relationship between *The Prince* and earlier advice-books, mine

Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 156–82; Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Political Philosophy' in C.B. Schmitt and Q.R.D. Skinner (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 387–452 revised and reprinted as Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Republican Virtues in the Age of Princes' in *Visions of Politics* (3 vols., Cambridge, 2002) ii, pp. 118–59; M. Viroli, *Machiavelli* (Oxford, 1998). On some of the inherent problems with Felix Gilbert's, John Pocock's, Quentin Skinner's, and Maurizio Viroli's reading of Machiavelli, see M. Jurdjevic, 'Machiavelli's Hybrid Republicanism', *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007), pp. 1228–57. On Felix Gilbert's changing interpretation of Machiavelli, see W.J. Connell, 'The Republican Idea' in J. Hankins (ed.), *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 14–29, p. 17, fn. 11.

³⁷ On humanist political theory as a distinctively Roman ideology, see Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 72 (1987), pp. 1–56 reprinted as Q.R.D. Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the Portrayal of Virtuous Government' in *Visions of Politics*, ii, pp. 39–92. On the Machiavellian rhetoric, see W.E. Wiethoff, 'Machiavelli's *The Prince*: Rhetorical Influence in Civil Philosophy', *Western Speech*, 38 (1974), pp. 98–107; E. Raimondi, 'Machiavelli and the Rhetoric of the Warrior', *MLN*, 92 (1977), pp. 1–16; E. Graver, 'Machiavelli's "The Prince": A Neglected Rhetorical Classic', *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 13 (1980), pp. 99–120; V. Cox, 'Virtù and the Example of Agathocles in Machiavelli's *Prince*', *Representations*, 13 (1986), pp. 63–83; E. Graver, *Machiavelli and the History of Prudence* (Madison, Wis., 1987); W. Rebhorn, *Foxes and Lions: Machiavelli's Confidence Men* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1988), pp. 192–227; J.F. Tinkler, 'Praise and Advice'; J.D. Lyons, *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton, N.J., 1989), pp. 35–71; R. Hariman, 'Composing Modernity in Machiavelli's *Prince*'; T. Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990), pp. 62–80; A.J. Parel, 'Machiavelli's Use of Civic Humanist Rhetoric', *Rhetorica*, 8 (1990), pp. 119–36; B. Spackman, 'Machiavelli and Maxims', *Yale French Studies*, 77 (1990), pp. 137–55; A. Russell Ascoli and V. Kahn (eds.), *Machiavelli and the Discourse of Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993); V. Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton, N.J., 1994); V. Cox, 'Rhetoric and Ethics in Machiavelli' in J. Najemy (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 173–89.

³⁸ A.H. Gilbert, *Machiavelli's Prince and Its Forerunners: The Prince as a Typical Book De regimine principum* (Durham, N.C., 1938).

centres more on the direct relationship between *The Prince* and the *Politics*. On the contrary, my intention is to elucidate as much Aristotle's analysis of tyranny as Machiavelli's discussion of principalities. Drawing parallels between the *Politics* and *The Prince* implies a particular reading of Aristotle's *Politics* that has been neglected in modern historiography. However, I should like to point out that there is inherent value in looking at *The Prince* through early-modern eyes, not least for our understanding of *The Prince*. Machiavelli's doctrine is not 'some sort of invisible ink which', to borrow John Dunn's elegant metaphor, 'becomes apparent only when held up to the light (or heat) of the twentieth-century mind'.³⁹ While I do believe that *The Prince* fits largely within and is a response to the humanist mirror-for-princes discourse, there are some good (albeit forgotten) reasons why Machiavelli's prince was often thought to be little more than a reproduction of Aristotle's tyrant(s). My aim is to show just how much this view is worth.

II. CONTROVERSY IN MACHIAVELLI

There is an insightful parallel between Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Bartolus' *De tyranno* (*On the Tyrant*) of around 1357 in the French Huguenot juriconsult Innocent Gentillet's (1535–88) *Anti-Machiavel* of 1576.⁴⁰ Gentillet draws the analogy in the preface to the third part of his book.

There remains now to handle the third part of his said doctrine, which concerneth Pollicie, whereof there are many parts, for in it are comprehended such Maxims, as concerne Peace, War, Faith, Promise, Oth, Clemencie, Crueltie, Liberalitie, Covetousnesse, Constancie, Craft, Iustice, and other vertues and vices, considerable in publike and politike persons. All these things *Machiavell* handles in such sort, as it is easie to know, that his onely purpose was to instruct a prince to bee a true tyrant, and to teach him the art of tyrannie. In which art, verily hee hath shewed himselfe a great doctor, yea far greater than *Bartolus*: for *Bartolus*, (who was a renowned doctor in the civile law) in his treatise written of tyrannie, wades no thing so deepe in the matter as *Machiavell* doth,

³⁹ J. Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of the 'Two Treatises of Government'* (Cambridge, 1969), p. ix.

⁴⁰ On Machiavelli and Bartolus, see the essays collected in J. Barstow (ed.), *Della tirannia: Machiavelli con Bartolo* (Florence, 2007).

although reading the treatise of *Bartolus*, it seemes that *Machiavell* hath learned a great deale of his knowledge: but *Machiavell* applieth it contrary, seeking, that men should hold it for good, whereas *Bartolus* speaketh of it as of a damnable thing, which men ought to repulse and shun with all their power.⁴¹

Controversy is at issue here. Gentillet is less concerned about Machiavelli's theft from Bartolus than his decision to apply it to the contrary.⁴² The Huguenot gives a summary of some of the ideas that he thinks Machiavelli has taken from Bartolus.

First *Bartolus* constituteth two kinds of tyrants, the one in title, the other in exercise. A tyrant in title (saith he) is hee which without any title, or els with a bad title usurpeth domination and seignorie: A tyrant in exercise is hee, who having a lawfull title to dominier and rule, ruleth not iustly and loyallie as a good prince ought to doe: after this hee numbresten sorts of actions, whereby a tyrant in exercise. The first action is, when he puts to death the mightiest and most excellent persons amongst his subiects, for feare they should arise against his tyrannie. The second, when he troubleth and afflicteth good and wise men of his domination, least they should discover his vices to the people. The third action, when he seekes to abolish studies and good letters, to the end wisdome may not be learned. The fourth, when he forbiddeth lawfull and honest assemblies and congregations, fearing men will arise up against him. The fifth, when hee hath spies in all places, fearing men speake evill of his evill actions. The sixth, when hee maintaines divisions amongst his subiects, to the end, one part may feare another, and so neither the one nor the other arise against him. The seventh, when he seekes to hold his subiects poore, to the end, that they being occupied in the meanes to get their living, they may machinate nothing against him. The eighth, when he seekes to maintaine warre to effeeblish his subiects, and to abolish studies, and to make himselfe strong, when he needs. The ninth, when hee trusteth more in strangers than in his owne subiects, and that he betakes himselfe unto a strange guard. And the tenth action is, when there is partialitie amongst his subiects, and he adhereth more to the one than the other.⁴³

Gentillet's reading of Machiavelli's axioms is loose to the point of misrepresentation. Nowhere in *The Prince* does Machiavelli declare that a prince must divide his citizens. On the contrary,

⁴¹ Innocent Gentillet, *Anti-Machiavel*, ed. C.E. Rathé (Geneva, 1968), pp. 251–2. All English translations are from Gentillet, *A Discourse upon the Meanes of Wel Governing and Maintaining in Good Peace, a Kingdome, or Other Principalitie*, ed. S. Patericke (London, 1602), p. 142.

⁴² On Gentillet's criticism of Machiavelli's use of paradiastole, see Q.R.D. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 172. On Machiavellian controversy as an offshoot of the humanist rhetorical tradition of arguing *in utramque partem*, see V. Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric*, pp. 17–43.

⁴³ Gentillet, *Anti-Machiavel*, pp. 252–3 and translated in Gentillet, *Discourse*, pp. 142–3.

for the Florentine, factions never did any good.⁴⁴ Only in the *Discourses* does Machiavelli claim that it benefits a tyrant to keep a state disunited.⁴⁵ ‘But,’ for Gentillet, ‘in all this doctrine of *Bartolus* can you find one onely point, that *Machiavell* would not have applied and taught to a prince?’ No. ‘All of these tenne kinds of tyrannical actions, set down by *Bartolus*, are they not so many Maximes of *Machiavell* his doctrine taught to a prince?’ Obviously. ‘We need then no more to doubt,’ Gentillet declares, ‘that the purpose of *Machiavell*, was to forme a true tyrant; and that hee stolne from *Bartolus*, one part of his tyrannical doctrine which he teacheth, which yet he hath much augmented and enriched’.⁴⁶

Controversy is not a casual element of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Aspects of his booklet are designed to incite dissent. One of the most flagrant and oft-quoted instances is the distortion of the Ciceronian lion and fox allegory. If Cicero argued in his *De officiis* that man ought to shun both force and fraud symbolised by the lion and fox respectively, this moral is soon capsized in *The Prince*.⁴⁷ Machiavelli reinvents the all-too-familiar myth of Achilles and Chiron the centaur inherited from Homer, Ovid, and Pindar by way of Giovanni Boccaccio’s (1313–73) *Genealogie deorum gentilium* (*Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*) of 1360 and then, contrary to Cicero, asserts that a prince must bring forth both the beast and the man within, and from the former take as models both the lion and the fox, the force and cunning embodied by the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 73.

⁴⁵ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, p. 157.

⁴⁶ Gentillet, *Anti-Machiavel*, pp. 253–4 and translated in Gentillet, *Discourse*, p. 143.

⁴⁷ Cicero, *De officiis*, ed. W. Miller (Cambridge, MA., 1913), 1.13.41: ‘Cum autem duobus modis, id est aut vi aut fraude, fiat iniuria, fraus quasi vulpeculae, vis leonis videtur; utrumque homine alienissimum, sed fraus odio digna maiore.’

⁴⁸ The myth of Chiron appears in one form or another in classical literature in Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology*, ed. R. Hard (Oxford, 2008), 1.2.3, 2.5.4, 3.4.4, and 3.10.3; Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica*, ed. H. Fränkel (Oxford, 1986), 1.554–8, 2.5.10, and 2.1229–42; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, ed. C.H. Oldfather (12 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1935), ii, 4.12.3–13; Homer, *The Iliad*, ed. R. Fitzgerald (Oxford, 2008), 4.218 and 11.830–32; Ovid, *Metamorphoseon*, Volume I: Books 1–8, ed. F.J. Miller (Cambridge, Mass., 1916), 2.630–49; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, ed. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod (5 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1926), ii, 5.19.8; Pindar, *Pythian Odes* in *The Complete Odes*, ed. S. Instone and A. Verity (Oxford, 2008), 3.1–45. For Giovanni Boccaccio’s retelling see *Genealogie deorum gentilium libri*, ed. J. Solomon (Cambridge, Mass., 2011), 3.19 and 5.19. For an interesting account of the reception of Machiavelli’s discussion of the myth of Chiron in France, see H. Ingman, ‘Machiavelli and the Interpretation of the Chiron Myth in France’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 45 (1982), pp. 217–25. For its role as an allegory of what Pindar referred to as *agraphoi nomoi*, Tacitus as *arcana imperii*, and Aristotle as *sophismata* or *kryphia*, and its reception in early modern Europe, see P.S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State*, pp. 111–40.

There are two modes of fighting: one in accordance with the laws, the other with force. The first is proper to man, the second to beasts... Since, then, a prince must know how to make use of the nature of the beast, he should choose from among the beasts the fox and the lion; for the lion cannot defend itself from traps, while the fox cannot protect itself from the wolves. It is therefore necessary to be a fox, in order to recognize the traps, and a lion, in order to frighten the wolves: those who base their behaviour only on the lion do not understand things.⁴⁹

The image is compelling. It enables Machiavelli to maintain that ‘a wise ruler, therefore, cannot and should not keep his word when such an observance would be to his disadvantage, and when the reasons that caused him to make a promise are removed.’⁵⁰ Machiavelli’s underlying assumption is a cynical view of mankind. ‘If men were all good, this precept would not be good. But since men are a wicked lot and will not keep their promises to you, you likewise need not keep yours to them.’⁵¹

One should begin by noticing, however, that within the economy of Machiavelli’s text controversy is what the reader is led to expect. Machiavelli proclaims his unorthodoxy in one of the central chapters (both literally and figuratively) of his book.

Because I know that many have written about this, I am afraid that by writing about it again I shall be considered presumptuous, especially since in discussing this material I depart from the procedures of others. But since my intention is to write something useful for anyone who understands it, it seemed more suitable for me to search after the effectual truth of the matter rather than its imagined one. Many writers have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen nor known to exist in reality. For there is such a distance between how one lives and how one ought to live, that anyone who abandons what is done for what ought to be done achieves his downfall rather than his preservation. A man who wishes to profess goodness at all times will come to ruin among so many who are not good. Therefore, it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain himself to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge or not to use it according to necessity.⁵²

⁴⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 60.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Machiavelli is cryptic about whose *ordini* (procedures) or advice he is referring to. The phrase *molti si sono immaginate repubbliche e principati* (many writers have imagined republics and principalities) brings most readily to mind Plato and the Platonic tradition later epitomised by Thomas More's (1478–1535) *Utopia* of 1516 and Francesco Patrizi da Cherso's (1529–97) *La città felice* (*The Happy City*) of 1553. However, Machiavelli's Polybian stance here, that is his intention to dismiss utopias and unconfirmed practices, is targeted less at Renaissance Platonists than the scholastic and humanist mirror-for-princes literature and its failure to discuss *la verità effettuale della cosa* (the effectual truth of the matter).⁵³

There is an underlying discourse with shared themes and radical schisms in *The Prince* between Machiavelli and the medieval and earlier Renaissance advice-book tradition, such as Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* and Francesco Patrizi da Siena's (1413–94) *De regno et regis institutione* (*On Kingship and the Institution of Kings*) of around 1460.⁵⁴ Reality is the main point of contention, the *verità effettuale* (effectual truth) about the *condizioni umane* (human condition) and the resulting concept of *virtù* (virtue). To be sure, Machiavelli's political realism was not conjured out of thin air. The thought 'necessity has no law' found in Ulpian's section of the Digest was in one way or another commonplace among lawyers and philosophers of the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries.⁵⁵ Giles of Rome spoke of actual princes as being on a spectrum between perfect tyranny and virtuous kingship. 'Those who rule to some degree

⁵³ Polybius, *The Histories*, ed. R. Waterfield and B. McGing (Oxford, 2010), 6.47: 'Next, what about Plato's political system, since it too is highly acclaimed in philosophical circles? But it would be unfair to admit it into the discussion. We do not let craftsmen or athletes take part in competitions unless they have been certified or trained, and it would be just as inappropriate to let Plato's system compete for first prize, unless or until it proves that it can act in the real world.'

⁵⁴ On the subject of *specula principis*, see L.K. Born's seminal articles; L.K. Born, 'The Perfect Prince According to the Latin Panegyrists', *American Journal of Philology*, 55 (1934), pp. 20–35; L.K. Born, 'The *Specula principis* of the Carolingian Renaissance', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 12 (1933), pp. 583–612; L.K. Born, 'The Perfect Prince, a Study in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Ideals', *Speculum*, 3 (1928), pp. 470–504. For a more recent discussion, see H.H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit* (Bonn, 1968).

⁵⁵ *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, ed. P. Krueger, T. Mommsen, and R. Scholl (3 vols., Berlin, 1872–7), i, Digest 1.4.2. Cf. Cicero, *De officiis*, 3.11.46: 'Sed utilitatis specie in re publica saepissime peccatur'. On medieval reason of state, see G. Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought: Public Law and the State, 1100–1322* (Princeton, N.J., 1964), pp. 241–309.

participate in the precautions of the kings and in the stratagems of the tyrants.⁵⁶ Notions of simulation and dissimulation were manifest in Patrizi's *De regno*.

The sullen and sad prince unsettles the souls of others and renders them anxious about what they are to do. Nor is anything more perilous in doubtful and adverse circumstances than to learn from the countenance of the prince that affairs are on the very brink of ruin. Hence it is proper that by simulating and dissimulating he should often show the contrary of the truth.⁵⁷

However, both Giles' and Patrizi's analyses all came with provisos. 'If kings and princes want their dominion to last,' for Giles, 'they must be most careful lest by deviating from justice they turn it into tyranny.'⁵⁸ 'Isocrates', Patrizi relates, 'advises his king to cultivate truth above all else, and that he act always openly and without dissimulating so that all know that trust can be placed in an unsworn ruler than in all sworn citizens.'⁵⁹ Thus, contrary to Machiavelli, earlier advice-books were inextricably tied to traditional ideas of virtue and idealised portraits of the prince.⁶⁰

The Neapolitan scholar Giovanni Pontano's (1406–1523) *De principe* (*On the Prince*) of 1464, written for his student and heir to the throne of Naples Alfonso of Aragon (1448–95), furnishes an instructive comparison.⁶¹ Modelled largely on Cicero and Sallust, it lists the whole range of classical virtues necessary to a prince.

⁵⁶ Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum* (Venice, 1502), 3.2.11: 'Verum quia nullus forte est omnino tyrannus, quia malum seipsum destruit, et si integrum sit, importabile sit ut dicitur 4. *Ethicorum*, et forte vix aut nunquam reperitur aliquis, qui sit omnino rex quin in aliquo tyrannizet; esset enim quasi semideus, si nihil de tyrannide participaret. Inde est ergo quod dominantes aliquid participant de cautelis regiis, et aliquid de versutiis tyrannorum.'

⁵⁷ Francesco Patrizi (da Siena), *De regno et regis institutione* (Paris, 1531), 7.10: 'Princeps vero morosus, ac tristis aliorum animos perturbat, anxiosque reddit quid acturi sint. Nec quicquam potest in rebus dubiis, atque adversis periculosius, quam ex vultu principis intelligere rem in praecipiti esse discrimine. Proinde simulando atque dissimulando saepe contraria ut ostendatur oportet.' I quote from the English translation in F. Gilbert, *Machiavelli's Prince and Its Forerunners*, pp. 126–7.

⁵⁸ Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, 3.2.14: 'Reges ergo et principes si volunt suum durare dominium, summe cavere debent ne a iustitia deviantes in tyranidem convertantur.'

⁵⁹ Patrizi (da Siena), *De regno*, 4.1: 'Isocrates regem suum monet ut veritatem ante omnia colat, idque manifeste semper et indissimulate agat adeo ut cuncti cognoscant iniurato potius regi, quam privatis omnibus iuratis fidem adhibendam esse.' See Isocrates, *To Nicocles*, ed. G. Norlin (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), p. 22.

⁶⁰ On the qualitative difference between pre-Machiavellian and Machiavellian realism, see S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: A Dissection* (London, 1969), pp. 188–215.

⁶¹ On Pontano and Machiavelli, see B. Richardson, 'Pontano's *De Prudentia* and Machiavelli's *Discorsi*', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 33 (1971), pp. 353–7; V. Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in*

Those who wish to rule must first of all set themselves two things: one is that they be liberal, the other is they be clement. Indeed, the prince that will exercise liberality will turn enemies into friends, strangers into his own, and unloyal people loyal. Moreover, he will draw foreigners living in distant lands to love him. He in whom we sense clemency resides we shall all love, adore, and have him like God. From these two things the prince is made similar to God, whose nature is to benefit everyone and forgive delinquents.⁶²

Liberality is a distinctively princely virtue.⁶³ Clemency tempers the prince's rule, elevating him to god-like status.⁶⁴ Pontano argues that adulation is to be shunned and ambition is to be banished.⁶⁵ 'The foundation of justice... is good faith – that is, truth and fidelity to promises and agreements' for Cicero, thus Pontano declares that the prince must be careful of what he promises.⁶⁶ He must remain affable and temperate, and avoid incontinence.⁶⁷ Echoing Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* (*War with Catiline*), a prince must rise above his emotion, since 'anger

the Renaissance (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), pp. 69–75; C. Ginzburg, 'Pontano, Machiavelli and Prudence: Some Further Reflections' in D. Ramada Curto *et al.* (eds.), *From Florence to the Mediterranean and Beyond. Essays in Honour of Anthony Molho* (Florence, 2009), pp. 117–25

⁶² Giovanni Pontano, *De Principe*, ed. G. Cappelli (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2003), pp. 8–10: 'Qui imperare cupiunt duo sibi proponere imprimis debent: unum ut liberales sint, alterum ut clementes. Princeps enim qui liberalitatem exercuerit ex hostibus amicos, ex alienis suos, ex infidis fidos faciet. Peregrinos etiam et in extremis terris agentes ad se se amandum alliciet. Clementiam in quo esse senserimus illum omnes admiramur, colimus, pro deo habemus. Utraque autem princeps deo maxime similis efficitur, cuius proprium est benefacere omnibus, parcere delinquentibus.' On Pontano's moral philosophy, see M. Roick, 'Mercury in Naples: The Moral and Political Thought of Giovanni Pontano' (Ph.D. thesis, European University Institute, 2009).

⁶³ On Pontano's understanding of liberality, see Pontano, *De liberalitate* in *I trattati delle virtù sociali*, ed. F. Tateo (Rome, 1965), pp. 3–63.

⁶⁴ On the classical concept of clemency, see Seneca, *De clementia*, ed. J.W. Basore (Cambridge, Mass., 1928). On the idea of the ruler as *quasi semidei, semidei, homines divini, ac si essent dii* in Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, see M.S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford, 1999), p. 140.

⁶⁵ Pontano, *De principe*, p. 10: 'Fugienda autem omnino est adulatio: aures enim adulantibus qui praebeat, is omnino suus esse desinet, ex aliorum assentationibus quam ex sua conscientia seque suaque ipse metiens. Ambitionem quoque, ut quae multorum ac magnorum malorum alitrix et parens sit.'; Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.26.91: 'Atque etiam in secundissimis rebus maxime est utendum consilio amicorum iisque maior etiam quam ante tribuenda auctoritas. Isdemque temporibus cavendum est, ne assentatoribus patefaciamus auris neve adulari nos sinamus, in quo falli facile est; tales enim nos esse putamus, ut iure laudemur; ex quo nascuntur innumerabilia peccata, cum homines inflati opinionibus turpiter irridentur et in maximis versantur erroribus.' Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, ed. J.C. Rolfe (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), 10.5–6 and 11.1–2.

⁶⁶ Pontano, *De principe*, p. 12: 'Quae promittas et cui etiam promittas videto. Non modo autem facultatum ac meritorum, sed etiam temporum atque ingeniorum habenda est ratio.' Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.7.23: 'Fundamentum iustitiae est fides, id est dictorum conventorumque.'

⁶⁷ Pontano, *De principe*, pp. 14–6: 'Imprimis autem studere oportet ut qui te adeunt facilem esse intelligant. Nhili enim tam alienum est a principe, nec quod aliorum in se odium tantopere concitet, quam asperitas et ea quae "morositas" dicitur. Contra vero, in omni vita maxime laudatur comitas gravitate temperata... Qui temperantem te senserit turpia nunquam petere audebit... Admonitores quoque voluptatum, ut pestem perniciosissimam, fugito.' See Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.25.88.

makes one less able to discern what is right, hatred drives to inequality, love hampers judgement, lust drives to violence, pain incites revenge, envy brings demise'.⁶⁸ Moderation, wisdom, and the love of letters are virtues.⁶⁹ Indolence is a vice.⁷⁰ The prince must be loving,⁷¹ humane,⁷² shun vices,⁷³ show integrity,⁷⁴ majesty,⁷⁵ and consistency.⁷⁶

Machiavelli radically overturns Pontano's image. 'Everyone will admit it would be a very praiseworthy thing to find in a prince those qualities mentioned above that are held to be good,' namely generosity, mercy, faithfulness, fierceness and courage, humanity, chastity,

⁶⁸ Pontano, *De principe*, p. 16: 'Qui aliis praeest omnino vacuus esse debet affectibus. Ira nanque rectum quod sit cernere minime patitur, odium ad iniqua impellit, amor iudicium impedit, trahit ad vim inferendam libido, stimulat ad vindictam dolor, invidia praecipitem agit.' See Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, 51.

⁶⁹ Pontano, *De principe*, pp. 22–6: 'Secundae quoque res sunt tanquam speculum quoddam nostri quae, ut de magistratu dicere solemus, qualis quisque sit apertissime ostendunt. Quamobrem tum maxime servanda erit continentia, cum quicquid libuerit licuerit. Cohibendus erit animus ne efferatur, ne insolescat, ne obliviscatur sui ipsius atque ita instituendus ut se e libertate in servitutem, e divitiis in paupertatem et ex alto atque illustri loco in fima obscuraque deici aliquando cogitet... Primum enim est ut colere sapientes assuescat; secundum ut illorum dictis aures libenter adhibeat; tertium ut eorum se quam maxime similem esse velit, quorum non modo facta, sed etiam dicta imitari contendat. Ex quibus principii usus, deinde progressionibus, ad quam contendit sapientiam vicotr consequetur... Mirum est enim quantum valeat ad optimamvitae institutionem assidua et diligens lectio.' On wisdom, Pontano refers to Plato, *The Laws*, ed. T. Saunders (London, 1970), 59B; Cicero, *De finibus*, H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), 5.21.58. On the love for letters, he refers to Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, ed. J.C. Rolfe (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), 4.5.

⁷⁰ Pontano, *De principe*, p. 36: 'Et quoniam non semper agendis negotiis occupati esse possumus et a libris secedendum est aliquando faciendaeque sunt intermissiones ac quaerenda tum animi tum corporis laxamenta, videre oportet ut cessatio omnis careat ignavia, ne cum relaxari quaerimus, desidiosi effoaminateque efficiamur; eritque ocium ut sine negotio sic absque segnitia.'

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 40: 'Ad conservandum autem et magis indies augendum familiarium et eorum quos intimos habeas amorem illud maxime valet, ut amari se abs te intelligant.' On the question of whether it is better for the prince to be loved or feared in classical literature, see Cicero, *De officiis*, 2.7.23–4; Isocrates, *To Nicocles*, 21–24; Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 10.4–6; Seneca, *De clementia*, 1.13.5.

⁷² Pontano, *De principe*, p. 42: 'Multum etiam conferet humanitas.' On the concept of *humanitas* in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see W. Ullmann, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, Md., 1966), esp. 27–9.

⁷³ Pontano, *De principe*, pp. 42–4: 'Non tam autem studendum est ut liberalis habere atque humanus quam cavendum ab iis vitiis quae his virtutibus dicuntur contraria.'

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 52–4: 'Et quoniam fortuna principum in edito et praelustri sita est loco praebetque se se spectandam omnibus, studendum est ut dicta factaque tua omnia eiusmodi sint quae non modo laudem tibi atque auctoritatem pariant, sed et familiares et populares ipsos ad virtutem excitent; ad quam nulla eos res magis excitabit quam spectata ipsis virtus tua et mores quam probatissimi.' On the relationship between the sovereign's virtue and that of his subjects, see Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, ed. W. Miller, (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1914), 8.8.5; Isocrates, *To Nicocles*, 31 and 37; Cicero, *De legibus*, ed. C.W. Keyes (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), 3.14.

⁷⁵ Pontano, *De principe*, p. 54: 'Maxime autem opinionem tum subiectorum tum coeterorum hominum conciliabit ea quae nunc a quibusdam etiam non indoctis viris, quanvis parum proprii, 'maiestas' vocatur.'

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 74: 'Totius autem maiestatis fundamentum est, si tecum ita quidem vivas ut minime a te ipse dissentias in omnibusque tum dictis tum factis fidem ut teneas atque constantiam quodque in aliis repraehendendum iudices, severus in te iudex, prius correxeris animumque pravis cupidinis minime obnoxium gesseris.'

loyalty, affability, seriousness, piety, and the like.⁷⁷ ‘But since neither is it possible to have them nor is it possible to observe them all completely, because the human condition does not permit it, a prince must be prudent enough to know how to escape the infamy of those vices that would take the state away from him, and be on guard against those vices that will not take it from him, whenever possible.’⁷⁸ Machiavelli discerns between more infamous and less infamous vices. He does not share Pontano’s assumption that a ruler must possess justice, piety, liberality, clemency.⁷⁹ On the contrary, Machiavelli’s prince cannot escape the prism of his self-interests.

Conventional analyses of virtue are cast to the wind in *The Prince* as Machiavelli’s political ideas lose any semblance of Renaissance humanist discourse. Liberality’s quasi-mystical properties, expounded not just in Pontano’s *De principe* but in Patrizi’s *De regno* turn metaphorically into poison. ‘There is nothing,’ in Machiavelli’s eyes, ‘that uses itself up faster than generosity (*liberalità*); for as you employ it, you lose the means of employing it, and you become either poor or despised or else, to escape poverty, you become rapacious and hated.’⁸⁰ And if liberality cannot save one, it is much safer for a prince to be feared than to be loved.⁸¹ Cicero’s celebrated axiom that it is better to be loved than to be feared suffers the same fate of the lion and fox allegory.⁸² ‘For one can generally say this about men: they are ungrateful, fickle, simulators and deceivers, avoiders of danger, and greedy for gain. While you work for their benefit they are completely yours, offering you their blood, their property, their lives, and their sons, as I said above, when the need to do so is far away. But when it draws nearer to you, they turn away.’⁸³ Machiavelli’s entire argument is based on an undeniably grim view of human nature. ‘A prince must nevertheless make himself feared in such a way that he will avoid hatred, even if he does not acquire love; since one can very easily be feared and yet not

⁷⁷ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 54.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁷⁹ Pontano, *De principe*, p. 4: ‘iustitia, pietatem, liberalitatem, clementiam, in te sitas esse intellexerint.’

⁸⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 56.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57–8.

⁸² Cicero, *De officiis*, 2.7.23–6: ‘Quod igitur latissime patet neque ad incolumitatem solum, sed etiam ad opes et potentiam valet plurimum, id amplectamur, ut metus absit, caritas retineatur. Ita facillime, quae volumus, et privatis in rebus et in re publica consequemur.’ See also Cicero, *Philippica*, ed. D.R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, Mass., 2010), 1.14.

⁸³ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 58.

hated.’ Thus, ‘if he must spill someone’s blood, he should do this when there is proper justification and manifest cause. But above all else, he should abstain from seizing the property of others; for men forget the death of their father more quickly than the loss of their patrimony.’⁸⁴ As Hannibal attests, cruelty towards one’s subjects is only permissible and indeed necessary in warfare. Experience shows that ‘the princes who have accomplished great deeds are those who have thought little about keeping faith and who have known how cunningly to manipulate men’s minds; and in the end they have surpassed those who laid their foundations upon sincerity.’⁸⁵ Thus Machiavelli corrupts the lion and fox allegory. Integrity is of little value. Deception is praised. ‘Men are so simple-minded and so controlled by their immediate needs that he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived’.⁸⁶ Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503), formerly known as Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, is presented as a model.⁸⁷

For Machiavelli the whole purpose of ruling is *mantenere lo stato* (maintaining the state). Machiavelli stresses the tension between honesty and utility and, as with the myth of Achilles and Chiron, subverts more than just the Ciceronian notion in *De officiis* that morality is an essential condition of expediency. He also inverts the three-form order of necessity in Cicero’s *De inventione* (*On Invention*) by placing safety and convenience before honesty.⁸⁸

One must understand this: a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things for which men are considered good, because in order to maintain the state he must often act against his faith, against charity, against humanity, and against religion. And so it is necessary that he should

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 60.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

⁸⁷ On perceptions of Cesare Borgia in the sixteenth century: see J.N. Hillgarth, ‘The Image of Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 59 (1996), pp. 119–29. J.P. McCormick offers a thought-provoking analysis of the Biblical resonances within Machiavelli’s account of Cesare Borgia in ‘Prophetic Statebuilding: Machiavelli and the Passion of the Duke’, *Representations*, 115 (2011), pp. 1–19. J. Najemy questions Machiavelli’s use of Cesare Borgia as a model prince in J. Najemy, ‘Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia: A Reconsideration of Chapter 7 of *The Prince*’, *The Review of Politics*, 75 (2013), pp. 539–56.

⁸⁸ Cicero, *De officiis*, 2.10.35: ‘Sed ne quis sit admiratus, cur, cum inter omnes philosophos constet a meque ipso saepe disputatum sit, qui unam haberet, omnes habere virtutes, nunc ita sciungam, quasi possit quisquam, qui non idem prudens sit, iustus esse, alia est illa.’ Cicero, *De inventione*, ed. H.M. Hubbell (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), 2.58: ‘Ac summa quidem necessitudo videtur esse honestatis; huic proxima, incolumitatis; tertia ac levissima, commoditatis; quae cum his nunquam poterit duabus contendere.’

have a mind ready to turn itself according to the way the winds of Fortune and the changing circumstances command him. And, as I said above, he should not depart from the good if it is possible to do so, but he should know how to enter into evil when forced by necessity.⁸⁹

Simulation is paramount. Not having such qualities breeds hatred and contempt. ‘Therefore, a prince must be very careful never to let anything fall from his lips that is not imbued with the five qualities mentioned above; to those seeing and hearing him, he should appear to be all mercy, all faithfulness, all integrity, all humanity, and all religion.’⁹⁰

Machiavelli delves at length into the causes of hatred and contempt. Hatred, he already argued, can be mitigated by not touching the honour and property of his subjects. ‘In most cases, so long as you do not deprive them of either their honour or their property, most men live content, and you only have to contend with the ambition of the few, who can be restrained without difficulty and by many means.’ Contempt is altogether different.

What makes him despised is being considered changeable, frivolous, effeminate, cowardly, and irresolute. From these qualities, a prince must guard himself as if from a reef, and he must strive to make everyone recognize in his actions greatness, spirit, dignity, and strength. Concerning the private affairs of his subjects, he must insist that his decisions be irrevocable. And he should maintain this reputation in such a way that no man can imagine he is able to deceive or trick him.⁹¹

Machiavelli’s discussion centres on new princes. But contempt needs time to accrue – changeability, frivolity, effeminacy, cowardice, and irresoluteness are not qualities that are immediately apparent. So there is a sense in which this advice is not directly or immediately relevant.

Machiavelli identifies two stages in the prince’s rule: one geared towards acquiring power, the other geared towards maintaining power. The hard politics of Severus act as a model for the first stage and the virtuous politics of Marcus Aurelius stand as model for the second stage.

⁸⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 61.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Marcus alone lived and died with the greatest honour, for he succeeded to the empire by right of birth, and he did not have to recognize any obligation for it either to the soldiers or the people. Then, being endowed with many virtues that made him venerable, while he was alive he always held both the one order and the other within their limits, and he was never either hated or despised ... Anyone... who examines in detail the actions of this man [Severus], will find him both a very ferocious lion and a very shrewd fox. He will see him feared and respected by everyone, and not hated by his armies. And one should not be amazed that he, a new man, was able to hold on to such imperial power, because his outstanding reputation always defended him from the hatred that the people might have felt for him on account of his plundering.⁹²

In Machiavelli's own words, 'a new prince in a new principality cannot imitate the deeds of Marcus, nor yet does he need to follow those of Severus. Instead, he should take from Severus those qualities that are necessary to found his state, and from Marcus those that are suitable and glorious in order to conserve a state that is already established and stable.'⁹³

Machiavelli's axioms in the later chapters of *The Prince* are in stark contrast to earlier ones. 'Nothing,' for Machiavelli, 'makes a prince more esteemed than great undertakings and showing himself to be extraordinary. In our own time we have Ferdinand of Aragon, the present King of Spain. This man can be called almost a new prince, since from being a weak ruler, through fame and glory he became the first king of Christendom.'⁹⁴ For Machiavelli, 'a prince is also respected when he is a true friend and a true enemy: that is, when he declares himself to be on the side of one prince against another, without reserve.'⁹⁵

A prince should also demonstrate that he is a lover of the virtues, by giving hospitality to virtuous men and by honouring those who excel in a particular skill. Furthermore, he should encourage his subjects to pursue their trades in tranquillity, whether in commerce, agriculture, or in any other human pursuit. No one should be afraid to increase his property for fear that it will be taken away from him, while no one should shrink from undertaking any business through fear of taxes. Instead, the prince must establish rewards for those who wish to do these things, and for anyone who seeks

⁹² Ibid., pp. 67–8.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 71.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 77.

in any way to enrich his city or state. Besides this, at the appropriate times of the year he should keep the populace occupied with festivals and spectacles. And because each city is divided into guilds or neighbourhoods, he should take account of these groups, meet with them on occasion, and offer himself as an example of humanity and munificence while always, nevertheless, firmly maintaining the majesty of his dignity.⁹⁶

‘If followed prudently,’ Machiavelli argues, ‘the things written above make a new prince seem like a long-established one, and render him immediately more secure and settled in his state than if he had possessed it for a long time.’⁹⁷ Fortune cannot be blamed for the demise of modern princes. ‘Adapt or perish, now as ever, is Nature’s inexorable imperative.’⁹⁸

III. TYRANNY IN ARISTOTLE

Gentillet overlooks the fact that Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and Bartolus’ *De tyranno* converge in the same place as *The Prince* and the *Politics*. Bartolus explicitly says in his *De tyranno* that the methods employed by the tyrant ‘are clearly enumerated by Aristotle in Book 5 of the *Politics* and Giles of Rome in the book *De regimine principum*.’⁹⁹ Why Gentillet chose to ignore the Aristotelian complexion of Bartolus’ analysis is best explained not by the legal background of Gentillet himself but by the political and intellectual context of his *Anti-Machiavel* and the clear statement of intention behind Bartolus’ *De tyranno*.

Gentillet’s *Anti-Machiavel* was written during the French Wars of Religion in response to what he perceived were the Machiavellian policies adopted by Catherine de’ Medici (1519–89), the mother of King Charles IX (1550–74), which allegedly led to the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of 23 August 1572.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 78–9.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 82.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 83–7. I borrow the phrase from H.G. Wells, *The Mind at the End of Its Tether* (London, 1945), p. 19. I should point out here, though, that Wells was making a self-conscious reference to Charles Darwin’s *Origins of the Species* of 1859. I am not suggesting that Machiavelli was an early evolutionist.

⁹⁹ Bartolus, *De tyranno* in D. Quaglione, *Politica e diritto nel Trecento italiano*, pp. 175–213, pp. 196–9 (8.445–85): ‘Quos actus [tyrannica] clarius enumerat Aristoteles v. Politicorum et Egidius in libro De regimine principum.’ See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1313a134–b28; Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, 3.2.10. C. Woolf questions Bartolus’ debt to Aristotle in C. Woolf, *Bartolus of Sassoferrato: His Position in the History of Medieval Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 384–94. Cf. L. Chiappelli, ‘Le idee politiche del Bartolo’, *Archivio giuridico*, 28 (1881), pp. 387–439.

We cannot denie it: but we may well say, that the doctrine of *Machiavell*, and the frequentation of them of his nation, are cause of the greatest and most detestable corruption, which is at this day in Fraunce: For of whom the Frenchmen learned and knowne atheisme, sodomie, trecherie, crueltie, usurie, and such other like vices, but of *Machiavell* and of them of his nation: So that they may brag, that they are well revenged of the warres which our auncestors have made in Italie.¹⁰⁰

Gentillet's eleventh policy maxim, namely that 'when a prince (saith master *Nicholas*) will pursue the death of any man, he ought to colour it with some just colour', is especially revealing. 'For the massacres of Paris, executed on S. *Bartholomewes* day, and the execution after, made of capitaine *Briquemand*, of *Maistre Arnaud* of Carignes, of contie *Mongomery*, and the lord of Monbrum, and other like, were all coloured with false imputations, by these *Messers Machiavellists*, and by wicked judges their slaves, as every one knoweth.'¹⁰¹

Gentillet's *Anti-Machiavel* is a piece of anti-Medicean pro-Huguenot propaganda. This much is clear from the dedicatory letter of 1 March 1576 to Francis, Duke of Alençon (1555–84) – Francis escaped Paris to join the Huguenot forces in 1575 and later secured the Edict of Beaulieu on 6 May 1576 promulgated by King Henry III (1551–89), which gave the Huguenots the right of public worship.¹⁰²

Heere will I ende these present discourses, exhorting and praying the French Nobilitie, and all other persons which love the publike good of France, to marke and earnestly consider the points which above wee have handled against *Machiavell*: For so may they know how wicked, impious and detestable the doctrine of that most filthie Atheist is, who hath left out no kind of wickednesse to build a tyrannie accomplished of all abhominable vices. They which know this, I beleieve will couragiouslie employ themselves to drive away and banish from France, *Machiavell* and all his writings, and all such as maintaine and follow his doctrine and practise it in France, to the ruine and desolation of the kingdome, and of the poore people.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Gentillet, *Anti-Machiavel*, p. 309 and translated in Gentillet, *Discourse*, p. 176.

¹⁰¹ Gentillet, *Anti-Machiavel*, p. 383 and translated in Gentillet, *Discourse*, p. 221.

¹⁰² On the ideological context of Gentillet's *Anti-Machiavel*, see A. d'Andrea, 'The Political and Ideological Context of Innocent Gentillet's *Anti-Machiavel*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 23 (1970), pp. 397–411.

¹⁰³ Gentillet, *Anti-Machiavel*, pp. 638–9 and translated in Gentillet, *Discourse*, p. 374.

Gentillet seeks nothing other than to bring about a rejection of Machiavellian doctrine in France and resuscitate French laws, customs, and sovereignty by disclosing the tyrannical methods pervasively employed in the country by Catherine de Medici, another Italian like Machiavelli.

Gentillet's intentions in writing effectively about tyranny echo those of Bartolus. The word 'tyrant', as Bartolus explains in the opening chapter of *De tyranno*, 'is derived from the Greek word *tyros*, which in Latin is called *fortis* (powerful) or *angustia* (cruelty), whence powerful kings were called tyrants'. Only later did it happen that 'the worst and improper kings, eager of wanton domination and who exercised a most cruel rule over the people, were called tyrants'.¹⁰⁴ Following Gregory's *Moralia*, Bartolus discusses tyranny in a state, province, city, household, and in oneself.¹⁰⁵ However, since context generally defines content, it is tyranny in a city that Bartolus is chiefly concerned with.¹⁰⁶ Since, as Gregory's *Moralia* revealed, 'a tyrant of a city is one who rules in the city not by law' and 'since there are many ways of ruling not by law, there are many types of tyrants. For some the tyrant is open and manifest and for others the tyrant is concealed and secret. Just as a manifest tyrant occurs by defect of title or by conduct so in the same way a tyrant is concealed by conduct and by defect of title.'¹⁰⁷

Bartolus' intentions are clear, namely to explore the legal validity of a tyrant's actions and disclose his practices so that he may be more readily identified and deposed. Bartolus lists these practices halfway through his *De tyranno* in a way almost identical to Giles of Rome and later Naudé and Gentillet.¹⁰⁸ Bartolus' analysis is far from naïve. 'Just as it is rare to find a

¹⁰⁴ Bartolus, *De tyranno*, p. 176: 'Primo quero unde dicatur tyrannus. Respondeo: a tyro Grece, quod Latine dicitur fortis seu agustia, unde 'fortes reges tyranni vocabantur. Postea accidit tyrannos vocari pessimos et improbos reges, luxuriose dominationis cupiditatem et crudelissimam dominationem in populis exercentes'; "a tyro, quod est angustia: quia angustiat et cruciat suos", secundum Huguccionem.'

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 177–8. See Gregorius Magnus, *Moralium libri sive expositio in librum Iob* in *Patrologiae latina*, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1862), 12.38, col. 1006.

¹⁰⁶ Bartolus, *De tyranno*, p. 180: 'Alius in civitate: de tyranno civitatis principaliter infra tractabitur.'

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 184–5: 'Quinto quero de tyranno civitatis, quotuplex sit eius species. Respondeo: ex predictis constat, quod tyrannus civitatis est qui in civitate non iure principatur. Sicut autem non iure principari multis modis contingit, ita multe sunt tyrannorum species. Nam quidam est tyrannus apertus et manifestus, quidam est tyrannus velatus et tacitus. Item quem esse tyrannum manifestum contingit quandoque ex defectu tituli, quandoque ex parte exercitii. Item eodem modo tyrannus velatus est quandoque propter titulum, quandoque propter defectum tituli.'

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 196–9.

man healthy in every respect since everyone suffers defects in the body, so it is rare to find some government that tends only to the common good and in which there is nothing tyrannical.’ Bartolus refers back to the principle in Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum* that good government is when the common good prevails over self-interest, as opposed to tyranny.¹⁰⁹

Gentillet stresses the difference of intentions between Machiavelli and Bartolus. ‘For that which *Bartolus* hath written of tyrannie, was to discover and condemne it: but that which *Machiavell* hath written, was to cause princes to practise and observe it, and to sow in their hearts a true tyrannicall poyson, under the pretext and names of a princes dutie and office.’ In other words, ‘there is no cause nor reason to compare this beastly *Machiavell*, a simple burne-paper-scribe of the towne-house of Florence, with this great Doctor *Bartolus*, who was one of the excellentest Lawyers of his time, and for one such is yet acknowledged.’¹¹⁰ Gentillet’s predilection for Bartolus over Aristotle comes to the fore.

Nowhere in the *Politics* does Aristotle declare the intentions behind his discussion of the means of preserving tyrannies. His analysis often reads as a mirror-for-princes, but his motives for disclosing the tyrant’s tricks are unclear. Aristotle’s analysis is couched in the broader subject of the dissolution of constitutions. But although justice and stability both play equal roles, one should note that Aristotle’s complete aversion to constitutional change suggests that a greater importance is attached to stability.¹¹¹ Of course, Thomistic philosophy offered a justification of civil disobedience and tyrannicide.¹¹² But in spite of Thomism’s

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 212: ‘Propter quod sciendum est, quod sicut raro reperitur unus homo sanus per omnia, quin in corpore aliquid patiaturs defectus; ita raro reperitur aliquod regimen, in quo simpliciter ad bonum publicum attendatur et in quo aliquid tyrannidis non sit. Magis enim esset divinum quam humanum, si illi qui principantur nullo modo commodum proprium, sed communem utilitatem respicerent. Illud tamen dicimus bonum regimen et non tyrannicum, in quo plus prevalet communis utilitas et publica, quam propria regentis; illud vero tyrannicum, in quo propria utilitas plus attenditur.’ See Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, 3.2.11.

¹¹⁰ Gentillet, *Anti-Machiavel*, pp. 253–4 and translated in Gentillet, *Discourse*, p. 143.

¹¹¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1301a39–40 and 1312a21–39. See R. Polansky, ‘Aristotle on Political Change’ in D. Keyt and J. Miller (eds.), *A Companion to Aristotle’s Politics* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 322–45.

¹¹² See Aquinas, *Political Writings*, ed. R. Dyson (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 72–5: ‘Now the abuse of authority can be of two kinds. First, when what is commanded by the ruler is contrary to the purpose for which the ruler was appointed: for example, if some sinful act is commanded contrary to the virtue which the ruler is ordained to foster and preserve. In this case, not only is one not bound to obey the ruler, but one is bound not to obey him, as in the case of the holy martyrs who suffered death rather

pervasiveness in the Renaissance Aristotelian tradition, Renaissance readers of the *Politics* generally took Aristotle on his own terms. Le Roy's criticism of Aristotle's zeal in discussing tyranny is judicious. Case's assertions about Aristotle's intentions are conjectural. To be sure, Aristotle argues that tyranny is a perversion. 'The perversions that correspond to the constitutions just mentioned are: Tyranny, Kingship; Oligarchy, Aristocracy; and Democracy, Polity.'¹¹³ But while there is an underlying morally critical tone to his discussion of tyranny, since the object of the *polis* (city) is to bring about virtue in the citizens, there is little doubt that Aristotle discusses the constitution just for the sake of completeness. 'It remains to speak of tyranny, not because there is much to be said about it; but because it, too, has been included in our classification of constitutions and must therefore have a place in our inquiry.'¹¹⁴

Aristotle identifies three forms of tyranny. Two overlap with kingship, namely one is by descent and another is by election. Aristotle, however, is chiefly concerned with the third kind. 'This form of tyranny is bound to exist where a single person rules over people who are all his peers or superiors, without any form of accountability, and with a view to his own advantage rather than that of his subjects. It is thus a form of rule exercised over unwilling subjects, for no free man will voluntarily endure such a system.'¹¹⁵ Aristotle opens his discussion on the means of preserving tyrannies with the causes of their destruction.

One of the ways in which a tyranny may be destroyed – and the same is true, as we have already noted, of all other forms of government – is by external causes. Another city, with an opposite form of constitution, may be stronger than a tyranny. The conflict of opposite principles will obviously lead such a city to want the destruction of the tyranny; and whenever people want to do something and have the power, they do it.¹¹⁶

than obey the ungodly commands of tyrants. Second, when what is demanded goes beyond what the order of authority can require... Cicero [in *De officiis*, 1.26] was speaking of a case where someone [Julius Caesar] had seized dominion for himself by violence, either against the wishes of his subjects or by coercing them into consenting, and where they had no recourse to a superior by whom judgment might be passed on the invader. In such case he who delivers his country by slaying a tyrant is to be praised and rewarded.' See J. Finnis, *Aquinas* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 288–91. Cf. Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, 1.6.49–50 and his interpretation of Judges 3:14: 'Aioth slew Eglon, king of Moab, who was oppressing the people of God under harsh slavery' as well as 1 Peter 2:20 and Proverbs 20:26.

¹¹³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279b4–10.

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1295a1–5.

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1295a20–25.

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1312a39–b5.

‘Another way in which tyrannies may be destroyed is by internal causes. Those associated in a tyranny may quarrel with one another.’¹¹⁷ Aristotle, like Machiavelli after him, identifies two main causes for internal attacks on tyrannies, namely hatred and contempt. ‘Of these hatred is something all tyrants are bound to arouse; but contempt is often the cause by which tyrannies are actually overthrown. It is a proof of this that the tyrants who have won the position by their own efforts have generally managed to retain it, while their successors proceed to lose it almost immediately.’¹¹⁸ The parallel with Machiavelli’s discussion of *odio* (hatred) and *disprezzo* (contempt) is uncanny. Machiavelli highlights how it was because of both hatred and contempt that the Emperor Pertinax was assassinated.¹¹⁹

For Aristotle, there are two opposite ways of preserving tyrannies: one typically Machiavellian and the other ostensibly less so. ‘One of them is the traditional way; and it is also the method of government still followed by the majority of tyrants. Many of its characteristics are supposed to have been originally instituted by Periander of Corinth; but many features may also be derived from the Persian system of government.’¹²⁰ Aristotle lists the measures later rehearsed for the most part by Giles of Rome and Bartolus.

These include measures previously mentioned as tending to the preservation of tyranny (as far as it can be preserved): the ‘lopping off’ of outstanding men, and the removal of men of spirit. In addition it is possible: to prohibit common meals, clubs, education, and anything of a like character – or, in other words, to adopt a defensive attitude against everything likely to produce the two qualities of mutual confidence and a high spirit; to forbid societies for cultural purposes, and any gathering of a similar character, and to use every means for making every subject as much of a stranger as is possible to every other (since mutual acquaintance creates mutual confidence); to require every resident in the city to be constantly appearing in public, and always hanging about the palace gates. (In this way they are least likely to escape notice in what they do and they will come to have a low opinion of themselves as a result of being continually in the position of slaves.) This line of policy also includes other tyrannical measures of a similar character, common in Persia and other barbarian countries. For example, a tyrant may try to ensure that nothing which any of his subjects

¹¹⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1312b9–15.

¹¹⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1312b17–30.

¹¹⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 67.

¹²⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1313a34–b29.

says or does escapes his notice. This entails a secret police, like the female spies employed at Syracuse, or the eavesdroppers sent by the tyrant Hieron to all social gatherings and public meetings. (Men are not so likely to speak their minds if they go in fear of people like these; and if they do speak out, they are less likely to go undetected.) He may sow mutual distrust and foster discord between friend and friend; between people and notables; between one section of the rich and another. Finally, it befits a tyrant to impoverish his subjects – partly to prevent them from having the means for maintaining a civic guard; partly to keep them so busy with their daily tasks that they have no time for plotting. One example of this policy is the building of the Egyptian pyramids: another is the lavish offerings to temples made by the family of Cypselus; a third is the erection of the temple to Olympian Zeus by the family of Peisistratus; a fourth is the additions made by Polycrates to the Samian monuments. (All these actions have the same object: to increase the poverty of the tyrant's subjects and to curtail their leisure.) The imposition of taxes produces a similar result. We may cite the example of Syracuse, where in a period of five years, during the tyranny of Dionysius the Elder, people were made to pay the whole of their property to the city. The same vein of policy also makes tyrants warmongers, with the object of keeping their subjects constantly occupied and continually in need of a leader.¹²¹

Aristotle summarises the aims and principles of the tyrant as follows. 'Their first end and aim is to break the spirit of their subjects. They know that a poor-spirited man will never plot against anybody. Their second aim is to breed mutual distrust. Tyranny is never overthrown until people can begin to trust one another... The third and last aim of tyrants is to make their subjects incapable of action. Nobody attempts the impossible.'¹²²

The second method of preserving tyrannies is far more subtle. 'Not only must he [the tyrant] refrain from expenditure in lavishing gifts which cause public discontent... he must also render accounts of his income and expenditure – a policy which a number of tyrants have actually practised.'¹²³ 'A tyrant,' Aristotle continues, 'should appear grave, without being harsh; and his appearance should be such that those who come into his presence will do so with awe, and not in fear. This is an aim which cannot easily be achieved if he fails to inspire

¹²¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1313a34–b28.

¹²² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314a12–29.

¹²³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314a29–b17.

respect.¹²⁴ Thus he appears to have military distinction. ‘Ideally, a tyrant should be moderate in his pleasure: if he cannot attain that ideal, he should at any rate avoid being seen.’¹²⁵

Indeed, a tyrant should do the opposite of nearly everything which we have previously described as characteristic of tyrants. He should plan and adorn his city as if he were not a tyrant, but a trustee. He should always show a particular zeal in the cult of the gods. People are less afraid of being treated unjustly by those of this sort, that is if they think that the ruler is god-fearing and pays some regard to the gods; and they are less ready to conspire against him, if they feel that the gods themselves are his friends. At the same time, the tyrant should show his zeal without falling into folly. He should also honour good men, in any walk of life; and he should do so in such a way as to make them think that they could not possibly have been honoured more by their own fellow citizens, if their fellow citizens had been free [to distribute honours themselves]. He should distribute such honours personally; but he should leave all punishments to be inflicted by the other officials or the lawcourts. It is a precaution common to all forms of monarchical government [and not peculiar to tyranny] that no single person should be promoted to any great position, and if such promotion has to be made, it should be shared by a number of persons, who will then keep a watch upon one another. But if, after all, a single person must be promoted to some great position, he should be someone of bold spirit: tempers of that sort are often the quickest to strike in all fields of action. If, on the other hand, a decision is taken to remove someone from a position of power, the removal should be gradual, and he should not be deprived of all his authority at a single blow. A tyrant should abstain from every form of arrogant behaviour, and from two forms above all others – the infliction of physical chastisement, and [sexual] abuse of the young. He should show a particular caution of behaviour when he is dealing with someone of sensitive honour. Arrogance in matters of money is resented by those who care about money; but it is arrogance in matters affecting honour which is resented by men of honour and virtue. A tyrant should therefore abstain from such acts; or, at the very least, he should make it clear that when he inflicts any punishment, he is doing so not from arrogance but in a spirit of paternal discipline, and when he indulges himself with the young, he is doing so not in the licence of power but because he is genuinely in love. In all such cases, too, he should atone for the dishonours which he appears to inflict by the gift of still greater honours.¹²⁶

Simply put, ‘he [the tyrant] should appear to his subject not as a tyrant, but as a steward and king of his people. He should show himself a trustee, not as one intent on his own interest; he should seek the society of the notables, and yet court the favour of the masses.’¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314b18–29.

¹²⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314b30–34.

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314b35–1315a23.

¹²⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1315a40–b10.

On 20 August 1513, the Florentine Ambassador to Rome Francesco Vettori (1474–1539) cited Aristotle in a letter to Machiavelli on the Swiss threat to Florence after the Battles of Ravenna in 1512 and Novara in 1513. ‘I am among those who fear the Swiss greatly, but I do not imagine that they can become new Romans, as they said to Pellegrino, because if you read the *Politics* carefully and the republics that have existed, you will not find that a republic like the confederate one can advance very far.’¹²⁸

Machiavelli replied to Vettori’s letter within a week, dismissing Aristotle and showing a preference for reason rather than authority.

Where I believe that you are completely deceiving yourself is in this matter of the Swiss: about whether they are to be feared more or less, because I think that one should be exceedingly afraid of them... Nor do I know what Aristotle says about confederated republics, but I do think carefully about what can be according to reason, about what is and what has been.¹²⁹

It is unlikely Machiavelli meant that he had not read the *Politics*. Copies of the book filled the shelves of the San Marco library in Florence.¹³⁰ Many of the editions of Leonardo Bruni’s (1370–1444) Latin version of the *Politics* of 1436 came with Aquinas’ commentary appended.¹³¹ Machiavelli’s father, Bernardo Machiavelli (1426–1500) owned a copy of the scholar Donato Acciaiuoli’s (1429–78) commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹³² It is far more likely that, aside from the greater importance attributed to reason than authority, Machiavelli

¹²⁸ Machiavelli, *Lettere*, ed. F. Gaeta (Milan, 1961), pp. 282–90 (136). All English translations are from in John Najemy, *Between Friends: Discourses of Power and Desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori Letters of 1513–1515* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), pp. 166–7. For a complete translation of Machiavelli’s correspondence, see Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence*, ed. J.B. Atkinson (DeKalb, Ill., 1996).

¹²⁹ Machiavelli, *Lettere*, pp. 291–6 (138) and translated into English in Najemy, *Between Friends*, p. 172. Aristotle, in fact, says virtually nothing of confederate republics. See G. Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli: storia del suo pensiero politico* (Bologna, 1980), p. 29, fn. 32; Najemy, *Between Friends*, p. 172, fn. 24.

¹³⁰ B.L. Ullman and P.A. Stadter, *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence: Niccolò Niccoli, Cosimo de’ Medici, and the Library of San Marco* (Padua, 1972).

¹³¹ E.F. Cranz, ‘The Publishing History of the Aristotle Commentaries of Thomas Aquinas’, *Traditio*, 34 (1978), pp. 157–92.

¹³² C. Ginzburg, ‘Machiavelli, l’eccezione e la regola. Linee di una ricerca in corso’, *Quaderni Storici*, 38 (2003), pp. 195–213; C. Ginzburg, ‘Diventare Machiavelli. Per una nuova lettura dei “Ghiribizzi al Soderini”’, *Quaderni Storici*, 41 (2006), pp. 151–64.

was also pointing out that Aristotle had said very little about confederated republics. The letter was the last one Machiavelli would send to Vettori before announcing on 10 December 1513 that he had written *The Prince*. ‘I have noted those things that profited me in their conversation and composed a little book *De principatibus* where I go as deeply as I can into thoughts on this subject, arguing what a principedom is, of what kinds they are, how they are acquired, how they are preserved, why they are lost.’¹³³

There is no explicit mention of Aristotle’s *Politics* in *The Prince*. Machiavelli’s only reference to Aristotle in his body of work comes towards the end of his *Discourses on Livy*, in Book 3 in the context of a discussion about how a state can be ruined by women.¹³⁴

Among the principal causes Aristotle gives for the downfall of tyrants is the one of having injured others through women by raping them, violating them, or breaking up marriages, as we discussed at great length in the chapter we wrote about conspiracies. Let me say, therefore, that absolute rulers and the governors of republics must not take this matter lightly; rather they must consider the disorders that through such an unforeseen event can arise and remedy them in time, so that the remedy does not bring with it damage and disgrace to their state or their republic.¹³⁵

Machiavelli has in mind here not just Aristotle’s words on the methods for ensuring the stability of tyrannies – ‘the arrogant behaviour of women has often been the ruin of tyrannies’ – but Aristotle’s analysis of the causes of factional conflict.¹³⁶

There is an example in the history of Syracuse, where constitutional change arose as a result of two young men, who were both in office, quarrelling about a love affair. In the absence of one of the

¹³³ Machiavelli, ‘Niccolò Machiavelli a Francesco Vettori: Firenze, 10 dicembre 1513’ in *Lettere*, pp. 301–6 (140) and translated into English in J. Najemy, *Between Friends*, p. 235. On *The Prince* and the Machiavelli-Vettori correspondence, see F. Chabod, ‘Sulla composizione de ‘Il principe’ di Niccolò Machiavelli’, *Archivum Romanicum*, 11 (1927), pp. 330–83 reprinted in F. Chabod, *Scritti su Machiavelli* (Turin: Einaudi, 1964), pp. 137–93; G. Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, 293–335; Ugo Dotti, *Niccolò Machiavelli: la fenomenologia del potere* (Milan, 1980), pp. 17–52 and pp. 100–6; J. Najemy, *Between Friends*, pp. 176–240.

¹³⁴ For a list of the implicit references to Aristotle in the *Discourses*, see Machiavelli, *The Discourses of Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. L.J. Walker (2 vols., London, 1950), ii, pp. 273–7. For criticisms of Walker’s edition, see F. Gilbert, ‘The Composition and Structure of Machiavelli’s *Discorsi*’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 14 (1953), pp. 136–56; L. Strauss, ‘Review: *The Discourses of Niccolò Machiavelli* by Leslie J. Walker’, *The Review of Metaphysics*, 6 (1953), pp. 437–46.

¹³⁵ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, p. 319 (3.26).

¹³⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314b18–35.

two, the other (in spite of being his colleague) seduced the affections of his friend; and the injured man, in his anger, retaliated by seducing his colleague's wife. Thereupon they drew the whole civic body into their quarrel and divided it into factions. The moral is that precautions ought to be taken at the very beginning of such disputes, and quarrels which involve those in positions of leadership and power ought to be settled at once.¹³⁷

That Machiavelli's only explicit reference to Aristotle, though it may appear in the *Discourses*, is to an obscure passage from his discussion of tyranny in the *Politics* speaks volumes about Machiavelli's reception of Aristotle's analysis of tyranny. To be sure, from the very preface of *The Prince*, Machiavelli's advice-book seems designed to reject not just the mirror-for-princes tradition but particularly Aristotle. His decision to rely solely on his 'knowledge of the deeds of great men... learned from a long experience in modern affairs and a continuous study of antiquity', that is ancient history, seemingly eschews any thought of Aristotle;¹³⁸ his claim in *The Prince* that all states are either republics or principalities seemingly shuns Aristotle's sixfold division of constitutions;¹³⁹ his claim that hereditary states are more easily held than acquired ones is seemingly at odds with what Aristotle said in the *Politics*;¹⁴⁰ and his aversion to factions mentioned earlier is seemingly in conflict with Aristotle's first methods for ensuring tyranny. Yet, on close inspection, nothing is quite as it seems.

Machiavelli's approach to the subject of politics in *The Prince* and the *Discourses* has been linked to Aristotle's own methodology in the *Politics*. Louis le Roy saw Machiavelli's emphasis on the deeds of great men and long experience of modern affairs in *The Prince* as nothing other than an update of Book 5 of the *Politics*. Bruni's letters to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester (1390–1447) and Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) of 1437 and 1438 on his new Latin translation of the *Politics* discussed in the previous chapter highlight how Renaissance readers of Aristotle were often struck by the plethora of examples given in Book 5 of the *Politics*.

¹³⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1303b17–1304a17.

¹³⁸ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 5.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 7. This dichotomy between republics and principalities is a recurrent theme in Machiavelli and is as anti-Aristotelian as it is Tacitean, see Tacitus, *Annals: Books 4–6, 11–12*, ed. J. Jackson (Cambridge, Mass., 1937), 4.33. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279a22–b10.

¹⁴⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 7. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1286b20–25 and 1312b20–30.

Machiavelli's opening claim that all states are either republics or principalities may be on the surface un-Aristotelian but it is not a direct rejection of Aristotle's sixfold classification of constitutions. It is rather the result of a different conception of *stato* (state).¹⁴¹ Machiavelli is here discussing the basic division of who owns coercive power within a given territory rather than the various forms of government. Political power may be held and wielded either by many or by one and, seeing how there is no discussion of the common good in Machiavelli's analysis of principalities, there is a sense in which Machiavelli's disjunction between republics and principalities is also a disjunction between ends, that is between wielding power for the good of the people and the good of the ruler. This disjunction, contrary to what might be believed, is found in Aristotle's *Politics*. 'Ruling... takes two forms, one for the benefit of the rulers, the other for the benefit of the ruled.'¹⁴² Machiavelli maintains this fundamental distinction even in the *Discourses* where he adopts Aristotle's sixfold classification of constitutions.¹⁴³

The similarities between Machiavelli's discussion of the means of maintaining the state and Aristotle's first method of preserving tyrannies is striking. Machiavelli's views on factions as dangerous to the preservation of the state are anticipated by Aristotle in his discussion of the general methods for preserving constitutions. For Aristotle, 'an endeavour should also be made, by legislation as well as by personal action, to guard against quarrels and factions among the notables; and watch should also be kept in advance on those who are not yet involved, before they too have caught the spirit of rivalry.'¹⁴⁴ This advice applies to all constitutions, good or bad, and precedes his claim about factions being useful to tyrants. The parallel with Machiavelli is uncanny.

Once evils are recognized ahead of time, they may be easily cured; but if you wait for them to come upon you, the medicine will be too late, because the disease will have become incurable. And what physicians say about consumptive illnesses is applicable here: that at the beginning, such an illness is

¹⁴¹ On the *stato* in Machiavelli, see H.C. Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue* (Chicago, Ill., 1996), pp. 281–94.

¹⁴² Aristotle, *Politics*, 1333a1–6.

¹⁴³ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, pp. 23–4 (1.2). On Machiavelli's claim about republics and principalities in *The Prince*, see E. Brenner, *Machiavelli's Prince*, pp. 11–5.

¹⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1308a31–35.

easy to cure but difficult to diagnose; but as time passes, not having been recognized or treated at the outset, it becomes easy to diagnose but difficult to cure. The same thing occurs in affairs of state; by recognizing evils in advance (a gift granted only to the prudent ruler), they can be cured quickly; but when they are not recognized and are left to grow to such an extent that everyone recognizes them, there is no longer any remedy.¹⁴⁵

Machiavelli's rule that 'anyone who is the cause of another becoming powerful comes to ruin himself' echoes Aristotle's statement that 'no single person should be promoted to any great position'.¹⁴⁶ His distrust of mercenaries is anticipated by Aristotle both in the *Ethics* and *Politics*.¹⁴⁷ As we saw earlier, both Machiavelli and Aristotle see hatred and contempt as the pitfalls of rulership,¹⁴⁸ property as a good not to be touched,¹⁴⁹ simulation and dissimulation as essential tools for governing,¹⁵⁰ and conspiracies by fanatics as the only effective form of conspiracy.¹⁵¹ These parallels all lend force and value to the view in the Renaissance that Aristotle had inspired Machiavelli's analysis.

It should be noted, however, that while on the face of it Machiavelli's *The Prince* seems chiefly indebted to Aristotle's first method of preserving tyrannies, a closer reading of the text shows a far more sophisticated reading of Aristotle than may have been thought by both contemporary and modern commentators on Machiavelli, one that includes Aristotle's second way of preserving tyrannies. The example of Agathocles is illuminating here.

¹⁴⁵ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 15–6; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1315a8–15.

¹⁴⁷ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 42–6. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1116b15–17; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1306a20–32. The intellectual origins of modern discourse on mercenaries are obscure. Albert the Great only briefly touched upon the subject, and not in his *Politicorum Aristotelis commentarii* but in his *Ethica in Opera omnia* (32 vols., Paris, 1890), iii, 2.2 (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1117b). So did Aquinas in his *Summa theologiae* 2a2ae (Q. 40), see Aquinas, *Political Writings*, pp. 239–46. Bartolus' argument that mercenaries became citizens of whichever city hired them in the *Tractatus represaliarum* of 1334 seems to undermine Aristotle's distinction, see C. Woolf, *Bartolus of Sassoferrato*, p. 173. Criticism of mercenaries was ubiquitous in the Renaissance. But the equation of tyranny with mercenaries only surfaces in the sixteenth century. Machiavelli of course claims that rulers have nothing to fear from arming their own citizens. This idea, though, pre-dates *The Prince* by almost a century, see Tito Livio dei Frulovisi's *De republica* of 1434 in *Opera hactenus inedita*, ed. C.W. Previté-Orton (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 287–388, p. 344. For a discussion of Renaissance attitudes towards the militia and mercenaries, see C.C. Bayley, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence: The De Militia of Leonardo Bruni* (Toronto, 1961); N. Stone Villani, 'Militia versus Condottieri: The Mercenary Debate in Renaissance Political Thought' (M.Phil. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2009).

¹⁴⁸ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 57; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1312b17–33.

¹⁴⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 58; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314a35–b17.

¹⁵⁰ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 60–1; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314b30–5.

¹⁵¹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 69; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1315a25–30.

Agathocles the Sicilian, who became King of Syracuse, was not only an ordinary citizen but also of the lowest and most abject condition. A potter's son, this man lived a wicked life at every stage of his career. Yet he joined to his wickedness such strength of mind and body, that when he entered upon a military career, he rose through the ranks to become praetor of Syracuse. Once placed in such a position, having decided to become prince and to hold with violence and without any obligations to others what had been conferred upon him by universal consent, and having informed Hamilcar the Carthaginian (who was waging war with his armies in Sicily), one morning he called together the people and the senate of Syracuse as if he were going to discuss some matters concerning the republic. At a prearranged signal he had his troops kill all the senators and the richest citizens; and when they were dead he seized and held the rule of the city without any opposition from the citizenry.¹⁵²

Such wicked and nefarious methods have come to epitomise Machiavellianism. And yet, as Machiavelli quickly reveals, should we ponder 'how, after so many betrayals and cruelties, Agathocles and others like him could live for such a long time secure in their native cities and defend themselves from foreign enemies without being plotted against by their own citizens' the answer becomes obvious. For Machiavelli, 'this depends on whether cruelty be badly or well used. Those cruelties are well used (if it is permitted to speak well of evil) that are carried out in a single stroke, done out of necessity to protect oneself, and then are not continued, but are instead converted into the greatest possible benefits for the subjects.'¹⁵³ Machiavelli's aforementioned shift in model from Severus to Marcus Aurelius betrays a sensitivity to Aristotle's general discussion about the means for preserving constitutions and the two opposing ways of preserving tyrannies.

The marriage of Aristotle's two methods of preserving tyranny in Machiavelli's advice-book begs new questions about the intentions behind it. It is tempting to read in Machiavelli's use of Agathocles and the adoption of Aristotle's two tyrants an attempt to first entice the reader with controversial axioms and then mitigate the practice by advocating a politics of virtue. Aristotle's second tyrant does not simply appear to be virtuous but, by feeding the lie, eventually becomes so. Crucially, the marriage casts new light on Machiavelli's

¹⁵² Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 32.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 33–4.

use of classical sources and encourages us to consider more carefully Aristotle's presence in other Machiavellian works. Reading the two texts together, that is the *Politics* and *The Prince*, shows not only the relationship between them but also the limits of reading Machiavelli purely against the scholastic and humanist mirror-for-princes tradition. There is no doubt that Machiavelli's advice-book was a product of and a response to that particular tradition. But too narrow a focus obfuscates the different pigments of Machiavelli's political thought. There are other intellectual contexts to which Machiavelli's work seems to respond, such as the *De tyranno* literature epitomised by Bartolus.

To be sure, the word 'tyrant' never appears in Machiavelli's *The Prince*.¹⁵⁴ Machiavelli rejects the use of the word as he extends his notion of principality to include features traditionally deemed tyrannical, as evidenced by his repeated disjunction between principality and liberty. Tyranny is a form of government and Machiavelli in *The Prince* is concerned with *lo stato* (state). In other words, there is no tyranny in his booklet just as there is no monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, polity, or democracy. Machiavelli is interested in describing the means whereby a single individual can maintain his rule regardless of the regime or government he decides to establish. In the *Discourses*, instead, the words *tiranno* or *tirannus* (tyrant), *tirannide* (tyranny), *tirannico* (tyranical), *tirannicamente* (tyrannically), *tiranneggiare* (tyrannise), and *tirannicidi* (tyrannicides) feature prominently since Machiavelli discusses different forms of government.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ L. Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, p. 26: 'the term "tyrant" never occurs in the Prince; "tyrant" is too harsh a word to use within the hearing of the prince.' I disagree below with Strauss' interpretation. Cicero uses the terms *rex*, *princeps*, *tyrannus*, and *dominus* interchangeably in *De Officiis* to describe, for example, Caesar, whom he sees as the epitome of the moral corruption of the Roman *res publica*; see Cicero, *De Officiis*, 3.83–5. Machiavelli does the same for the Spartan Nabis, whom he describes as prince in Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 36 and as tyrant in Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 1.40 and 3.6. On Cicero's analysis of tyranny, see N. Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley, Cal., 1988), pp. 144–7 and pp. 155–8. On Cicero's political thought more generally, see E.M. Atkins, 'Cicero' in C. Rowe and M. Schofield, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 477–516.

¹⁵⁵ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, pp. 23–4 (1.2).

Furthermore, Machiavelli's explanation of the origins of tyranny in the *Discourses* differs from Aristotle's in the *Politics*. For Machiavelli tyrannies are born out of succession whereas for Aristotle they are the product of demagogy.¹⁵⁶

In the beginning of the world, when its inhabitants were few, they lived for a time scattered like the beasts; then as the generations multiplied they gathered together, and in order better to defend themselves, they began to consider carefully who among them was stronger and braver, and they made him their leader and obeyed him. From this arose knowledge of things honourable and good as opposed to those which are pernicious and evil, for noticing that when someone did harm to his benefactor it aroused hatred and compassion among men, since they condemned the ungrateful and honoured those who showed gratitude, and thinking that the same injuries could also be inflicted upon themselves, they set about making laws in order to avoid similar evils and ordained punishments for whoever violated them: from this arose knowledge and justice. The result was that later when they had to elect a prince, they did not support the boldest but, instead, the man who was most prudent and just. Yet later when they began creating princes through hereditary succession and not by election, the heirs immediately began to degenerate from their ancestors, and abandoning acts of special worth, they thought princes had nothing to do but surpass others in luxury and lasciviousness and all other forms of licentiousness, so that as the prince came to be hated, then became afraid on account of this hatred, and quickly passed from fear to harmful acts, tyranny immediately arose.¹⁵⁷

But just because there is no tyranny in *The Prince* or because Machiavelli's account of the origins of tyranny differs from Aristotle's it does not mean Machiavelli's prince was not Aristotle's tyrant. The passage above reveals how Machiavelli's adopts in the *Discourses* Aristotle's pessimistic view of hereditary kingship which he described earlier in *The Prince* as 'easy to maintain if customs are kept and the prince is ordinarily diligent'. It is clear, always from the *Discourses*, that Machiavelli thinks this is seldom the case. Furthermore, tyrannies for Machiavelli and Aristotle are not moral but political aberrations. Machiavelli evaluates tyrannies in the *Discourses* much like Aristotle does in the *Politics*, that is purely on a political basis, namely their stability.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1305a7–23.

¹⁵⁷ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, p. 24 (1.2).

¹⁵⁸ R. Aron, *Machiavel et les tyrannies modernes* (Paris, 1993), p. 76.

On close inspection, then, there does seem to be a good case for drawing a parallel between *The Prince* and the *Politics*; even more so than early readers of Machiavelli were keen to acknowledge. Indeed, a careful comparison of both texts suggests that Machiavelli had a far more sophisticated understanding of Aristotle's discussion of tyranny than hitherto thought, which brings us to a broader point about the reception of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance.

V. CONCLUSION

The strong similarities between Aristotle's discussion of tyranny in Book 5 of the *Politics* and Machiavelli's prince beg questions about the effect Machiavelli had on the reception of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance. If Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions was seen as the source of Machiavelli's controversial axiom, it is unsurprising to find that some early-modern readers of Machiavelli sought to address the charge of Machiavellianism put forward to Aristotle. Case's initial reluctance to discuss Aristotle's analysis of the means of preserving tyrannies is emblematic. He eventually drew a distinction between Aristotle and Machiavelli in his *Sphaera civitatis*. Felice Figliucci (1525–90), despite making no reference to Machiavelli, anticipated Case's concerns in his *De la politica, ovvero scienza civile* (*On Politics, That Is Civil Science*) of 1583.

M.L. Now it remains for us to talk about the way in which these monarchies [tyrannies] are kept in order to have a full and complete understanding of this subject...

M.F. I do not think we should talk about this since tyrannies are sad and unjust things. On the contrary, one should learn how to destroy them rather than preserve them. I do not see how talking about such a terrible thing, that is how tyranny must be saved and preserved, is the duty of a good man.

M.L. I do not approve nor praise tyranny. On the contrary, I criticise and condemn it above all else. Nor do I wish that we explore the ways in which tyrannies are saved and kept so that tyrants may use these methods for their own preservation, but so as they may see how terribly and inhumanely they must live to preserve themselves, so that they may know the misery and unhappiness they must live, and so that they may flee tyranny, see it as an abomination, hate it, and return to a better life.

Therefore do not criticise me like others have criticised Aristotle and, before him, divine Plato, who wrote about the means of preserving tyrannies too, yet only for the reasons that I have said above.¹⁵⁹

Le Roy was the first to overtly criticise Aristotle for his discussion of the means of preserving tyrannies. Yet, as we shall see in the next chapter, only Nifo sought to remoralise him in the wake of Machiavelli's analysis, thus offering us a unique window into the reception of Aristotle's political thought in the late Renaissance. So, without further ado, let us now turn to one of the most creative plagiarisms of the Renaissance.

¹⁵⁹ Felice Figliucci, *De la politica, ovvero scienza civile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile libri otto da M. Felice Figliucci scritti in modo di Dialogo*. (Venice, 1583), fols. 185r-v: 'M.L. ... Hora resta che parliamo de i modi ne' quali queste monarchie si conservano per dare piena et assoluta cognizione di tutta questa materia... M.F. A me pare che di questo non si dovesse parlare, imperoche essendo le tirannidi cose triste et ingiuste, piu tosto si deveria imparare il modo di distruggerle che di conservarle, et non so come questo sia uffizio d' huomo da bene a insegnare che una cosa cosi scelerata, come è la tirannide si debbia salvare et mantenere. M.L. Io per questo non approvo nè laudo la tirannide, anzi la biasimo, et vitupero sopra modo, nè volgio io che vediamo in che modo le tirannidi si salvino, et conservino, accioche questi modi imparando li tiranni li usino poi per conservazione loro, anzi accioche vedendo essi quanto sceleratamente, et inhumanamente debbiano viver per conservarsi; conoscano la loro miseria, et infelicità; et per questo la tirannide fuggano et habbiano in abominazione, et odio, et ritornino a miglior vita; si che non mi riprendere si come ancora alcuni hanno ripreso Aristotile, et prima di lui fu ripreso il divino Platone, che pure scrisse questi modi di conservare le tirannidi, solo per la cagione che io vi ho detto.' It is unclear who exactly Figliucci is referring to here when he says that alcuni hanno ripreso Aristotile (some have criticised Aristotle). The only author I can think of is Le Roy. But criticisms of Aristotle's discussion of the means of preserving tyranny were commonplace in the Renaissance.

Rescuing Aristotle from Machiavelli:

Agostino Nifo

I. A RENAISSANCE PLAGIARISM OF MACHIAVELLI

Before and in our age, which we may rightly describe with the old saying, *in this time the arts acquired splendor and none were better than before*, there was no shortage of individuals who began to illustrate and explain in their works the subject of governing. Among them, Nifo and Machiavelli portrayed their Princes as they most often seem; Erasmus, Osorius, Fox, Natta, Omphal, and Wimpeling described them as they should morally govern; Mambrino Roseo, Frachetta, and Lelio Maretti from Siena (whose book on common law is not finished) described them as they are allowed to act according to the common laws of Politics; and finally Bellarmine, Ribadenera, and Scribani described them as they should govern according to Christian precepts.¹

Gabriel Naudé (1600–53), *Bibliographia politica* (Venice, 1633).

Machiavellianism quickly spread in the sixteenth century over vast swathes of Europe, becoming a cornerstone of the history of political thought. The French jurist and political philosopher Jean Bodin's (1530–96) words are emblematic. He wrote in his *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (*Method on the Easy Comprehension of History*) of 1572 that Machiavelli was the first to write anything decent about politics in about twelve hundred years, that is since Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, Dionysius, Plutarch, Dio, and Tacitus. Machiavelli's sayings, he

¹ Gabriel Naudé, *Bibliographia politica*, ed. D. Bosco (Rome, 1997), pp. 150–2: 'Superiori vero ac nostra aetate, de qua merito quis antiquum istud usurpare posset, *Sumpserunt artes hac tempestate decorem Nullaque non melior quam prius ipsa fuit*; non defuerunt sane, qui eandem de Principatu tractationem laboribus suis illustrandam explicandamque susciperent. Ex quibus Niphus et Machiavellus Principes suos effinxere, quales ut plurimum esse deprehenduntur: Erasmus, Osorius, Foxius, Natta, Omphalius, Wimpelingus, ut se moraliter gerere deberent: Mambrinus Roseus, Frachetta, et Laelius Marettus Senensis, cuius liber publici iuris nondum factus est, ut illis Politicae communis legibus agere conceditur: Bellarminus denique, Ribadeinera, et Scribanus, ut se ad Christianae Religionis praecepta componere deberent.'

remarked, ‘are on the lips of everyone, and there is no doubt that he would have written more fully and more effectively and with a greater regard for truth, if he had combined a knowledge of the writings of ancient philosophers and historians with experience.’² The French scholar, editor, and librarian Gabriel Naudé agreed. He had already made explicit his sympathies for Machiavelli in his *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté faussement soupçonnez de magie* (*Apology for All the Great Men Falsely Suspected of Magic*) of 1625. But when he wrote his *Considérations politiques sur les coups d’état* (*Political Considerations upon Refin’d Politicks, or Masterstrokes of State*) allegedly published in 1639 he cited Bodin’s *Methodus* to further make his point.³

In 1645, Naudé edited the little-known *Opuscula moralia et politica* (*Moral and Political Works*) of the Renaissance Aristotelian philosopher Agostino Nifo (1469–1538).⁴ Naudé began his editorial career in 1628 with the *Annotationes in artem parvam Galeni* (*Notes on Galen’s Small Art of Medicine*) of the French physician André du Laurens (1558–1609) and the French anatomist Jean Riolan the Elder’s (1539–1605) *In artem parvam Galeni commentaria* (*Commentary on Galen’s Small Art of Medicine*) and *Propaedeutica philosophica* (*Philosophical Introduction*) of 1631. He continued to edit philosophical works in Italy between 1631 and 1642 while studying medicine at Padua and serving as librarian to Cardinal Gianfrancesco Guidi di Bagno (1578–1641) and then briefly to Cardinal Antonio Barberini (1607–71), writing prefaces to several works of Italian scholars, most notably Cardano’s *De praeceptis ad filios libellus* (*Little Book of*

² Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (Paris, 1566), p. 177. All English translations are from Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, ed. B. Reynolds (New York, N.Y., 1945), p. 153. On Bodin, see J.H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Sixteenth-Century Revolution in the Methodology of Law and History* (New York, N.Y., 1963); J.H. Franklin, *Jean Bodin and the Rise of Absolutist Theory* (Cambridge, 1973); C.Y. Zarka, *Jean Bodin: nature, histoire, droit et politique* (Paris, 1996). For a bibliography of recent scholarship on Bodin, see D. Quaglioni, ‘Verso un nuovo ritratto di Jean Bodin: appunti in margine alla letteratura più recente’ in A.E. Baldini (ed.), *Jean Bodin a 400 anni dalla morte: bilancio storiografico e prospettive di ricerca* (Florence, 1997), special edition of *Il pensiero politico: Rivista di Storia delle Idee Politiche e Sociali*, 30.2 (1997), pp. 155–390.

³ Naudé, *Considérations politiques sur les coups d’état*, ed. F. Marin and M.O. Perulli (Paris, 1988), p. 84: ‘Or entre tous les points de la politique, je ne vois pas qu’il y en ait un moins agité et moins rebattu, ni pareillement plus digne de l’être que celui des secrets, ou pour mieux dire des coups d’Etat.’ All English translations are from Gabriel Naudé, *Political Considerations upon Refin’d Politicks, and the Master-Strokes of State*, ed. W. King (London, 1711). Note, however, that this passage is missing from King’s translation. I have, therefore, given my own. On Naudé and *arcana imperii*, see P.S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 141–85. On the reception of Bodin, see H.A. Lloyd (ed.), *The Reception of Bodin* (Leiden, 2013). On Naudé and reason of state, see F. Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (Munich, 1957), pp. 246–56. On the date of Naudé’s *Considérations*, see P.S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State*, p. 141, fn. 1.

⁴ Agostino Nifo, *Opuscula moralia et politica*, ed. G. Naudé (Paris, 1645). This edition generally forms the basis of modern editions of Nifo’s works.

Precepts to His Children) of 1635. In 1642, he returned to France to serve as librarian to Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642) and then Cardinal Mazarin (1602–61). He subsequently travelled to the Low Countries, England, Germany, Switzerland, and once again to Italy in 1645, moving to Stockholm in 1652 to serve as librarian to Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–89) before returning to France in 1653, where he died, at Abbéville in Picardy, on July 29, 1653. By the time of his death he had edited, prefaced, and published the works of around thirty jurists, natural philosophers, and literati, including Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) and Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639).⁵

Naudé’s decision to edit Nifo’s *Opuscula* is puzzling – even more so when examined in the light of Nifo’s philosophical output, that is his plethora of commentaries on Aristotle’s *Organon*, *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *Meteorology*, *Rhetoric*, and *On the Soul* and Naudé’s fascination with scholastic and Renaissance Aristotelian philosophy.⁶ None of Nifo’s commentaries appear in Naudé’s edition of his *Opuscula* and there is only a brief reference to his political thought in Naudé’s *Bibliographia politica*. The only mention of his work in the *Considérations politiques* is of his theology and astrology rather than practical science.⁷ To all intents and purposes, Naudé was more interested in Nifo’s speculative philosophy than his theory of ethics or politics.⁸

⁵ On Naudé, see J. Rice, *Gabriel Naudé, 1600–1653* (Baltimore, Md., 1939). On Naudé’s editorial career, see P.O. Kristeller, ‘Between the Italian Renaissance and the French Enlightenment: Gabriel Naudé as an Editor’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 32 (1979), pp. 41–72 reprinted in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (4 vols., Rome, 1956), iii, pp. 613–43.

⁶ Naudé’s fascination with Aristotelian theoretical philosophy is partly evidenced by his editorial work and partly by the list of authors recorded in the *Iudicium* to Nifo’s *Opuscula* reprinted in P.O. Kristeller, ‘Between the Italian Renaissance and the French Enlightenment’ in *Studies*, iii, appendix 1.

⁷ Naudé, *Considérations politiques*, p. 94 and translated in Naudé, *Political Considerations*, p. 45. The term ‘practical science’ is used to refer to Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, *Magna Moralia*, and *Politics*, that is those works that deal with the conduct and happiness of the individual and society. It is distinct from ‘theoretical science’, which seeks knowledge per se, and ‘productive science’, that is rhetoric and poetics, see Aristotle, *Topics*, ed. H. Tredennick and E. S. Forster (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 145a15–16; Aristotle, *Physics*, R. Waterfield (Oxford, 2008), 192b8–12; Aristotle, *Meteorology*, ed. H.D.P. Lee (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), 1025b25, 1026a18–19, and 1064a16–19; Aristotle, *On the Soul*, ed. H. Lawson-Tancred (London, 1987), 403a27–b2; Aristotle, *On the Heavens*, ed. W.K.C. Guthrie (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), 298a27–32; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. D. Ross and L. Brown (Oxford, 2009), 1139a26–28 and 1141b29–32.

⁸ Naudé, *Bibliographia politica*, p. 108: ‘Ab istis duobus Graecis ad Arabes deveniendum est, et consulendus Aben Rois. Ille siquidem praeter commentarios in Aristotelem, libellum etiam de animae beatitudine conscripsit: qui ab Augustino Nipho, Philosopho Italorum omnium longe celeberrimo, haud poenitendis quaestionibus illustratus, etiamnum hodie prae curiosorum manibus habetur.’ See also *Ibid.*, p. 172.

The answer to this riddle lies in Nifo's *De regnandi peritia*. Nifo was born in the small town of Sessa Aurunca in Campania around 1470. A philosophy student in Padua under the Italian Averroist Nicoletto Vernia (1420–99), he was later appointed lecturer there in natural philosophy in 1492 and immediately set to work on one of his major works of philosophy, *De intellectu* (*On the Intellect*), published in 1503, an Averroistic treatise on Peripatetic noetics, that is on the origin and immortality of the soul.⁹ He succeeded the famous Italian philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) to an ordinary professorship in natural philosophy in Padua in 1497 but left the Northern Italian town a year later to return to Sessa where he began to learn Greek and became involved with the Pontano Academy.¹⁰ He picked up a lectureship in Naples in 1504 and Salerno in 1507 and regularly travelled between Sessa and Rome between 1510 and 1514 before moving to Rome to take up a chair in philosophy in that last year. In 1518, at the behest of Pope Leo X (1471–1521), he became embroiled in the famous controversy over the immortality of the soul sparked by Pomponazzi. In response to Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae* (*On the Immortality of the Soul*) of 1516, which described the soul's corporality and mortality, Nifo wrote his own treatise *De immortalitate animae contra Petrum Pomponatium* (*On the Immortality of the Soul against Pietro Pomponazzi*) in defence of the soul's immortality. Nifo's attack elicited a response by Pomponazzi. In 1519, however, Nifo dropped the debate and moved to Pisa where he took a chair in physics. He there wrote his *Epitomata rhetorica ludicra* (*Summary of Rhetoric in Jest*) of 1521 and three political tracts, *Libellus de his quae ab optimis principibus agenda sunt* (*Small Book on Those Things Which Must Be Done by the Ideal Prince*, henceforth *Libellus*) of 1521, *De regnandi peritia* (*On the Art of Governing*) of 1523, and *De rege et tyranno* (*On the King and Tyrant*) of 1526. He then returned to Salerno where he taught under the aegis of Prince Ferrante Sanseverino (1507–68) and wrote a popular Aristotelian treatise on beauty entitled *De pulchro et amore* (*On Beauty and Love*) of 1528. In 1531 he began teaching again

⁹ On Nifo's *De intellectu*, see especially L. Spruit's 'Introduction' and 'Analytical Summary' in Agostino Nifo, *De intellectu*, ed. L. Spruit (Leiden, 2011), pp. 1–107; E.P. Mahoney, 'Agostino Nifo's Early Views on Immortality', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 8 (1970), pp. 451–60 reprinted in E.P. Mahoney, *Two Aristotelians of the Italian Renaissance: Nicoletto Vernia and Agostino Nifo* (Aldershot, 2000), VII. On Paduan Aristotelianism more generally, see B. Nardi, *Saggi sull'aristotelismo padovano dal secolo xiv al xvi* (Florence, 1958); A. Poppi, *Introduzione all'aristotelismo padovano* (Padua, 1970).

¹⁰ On Nifo and the Pontano Academy, see A. Altamura, *L'umanesimo nel mezzogiorno d'Italia: storia, bibliografia e testi inediti* (Florence, 1941), pp. 111–61.

in Naples, and wrote among other things a book on courtiers entitled *De re aulica* (*On the Court*) in 1534. He died in Sessa on January 18, 1538, leaving several manuscripts in his drawer, some of which were published posthumously.¹¹

Contrary to what the charge of plagiarism might suggest, Nifo was a complex, original, and eclectic figure. An Averroist at first, he soon abandoned Averroism for neo-Platonic syncretism and began showing a keen interest in ancient Greek and medieval commentators, chiefly Themistius, Simplicius, Albert the Great (1200–80) and Aquinas (1225–74).¹² The move away from Averroism evident in his commentary on the *Physics* of 1508 was largely the result of his acquiring a knowledge of Greek and developing the typically humanist dissatisfaction with medieval Latin renderings of Greek classics; this eventually led him to advocate a reliance on Greek commentators for Greek classics and Latin commentators for Latin classics. Despite his interests in Platonism and the neo-Platonic tradition of Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), he remained faithful to Aristotle and rejected the Platonic-Aristotelian conciliatory philosophy of his teacher Nicoletto Vernia, siding with the Stagirite in the Plato-Aristotle controversy of the Renaissance sparked by George Gemistos Plethon (1355–1452).¹³

The circumstances that led Nifo to write *De regnandi peritia* are obscure. Nifo had already tried his hand at writing a mirror-for-princes the year before with the *Libellus* which he

¹¹ On Nifo's life, see P. Tuozzi, 'Agostino Nifo e le sue opere', *Atti e memorie della Reale Accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Arti di Padova*, n.s., 20 (1904), pp. 63–86; E.P. Mahoney, 'A Note on Agostino Nifo', *Philological Quarterly*, 50 (1971), pp. 125–32; G. Monarca, *Agostino Nifo vita ed opere: traccia per una riscoperta* (Latina, 1975); P. Borraro, 'Agostino Nifo, umanista e filosofo', *Archivio storico di terra di lavoro*, 5 (1976–7), pp. 169–92 [not seen]; E. de Bellis, 'Monografia introduttiva' in Agostino Nifo, *La filosofia nella corte*, ed. de Bellis (Milan, 2010), pp. 17–96. For a complete bibliography of Nifo's works, see E. de Bellis, *Bibliografia di Agostino Nifo* (Florence, 2005).

¹² On Nifo's early Averroism, that is his commentary on Averroes' *Destructio destructionum*, see E.P. Mahoney, 'Philosophy and Science in Nicoletto Vernia and Agostino Nifo' in A. Poppi (ed.), *Scienza e filosofia all'Università di Padova nel Quattrocento* (Trieste, 1983), pp. 135–203, pp. 173–203 reprinted in E.P. Mahoney, *Two Aristotelians of the Italian Renaissance*, I; H.C. Kuhn, 'Die Verwandlung der Zerstörung der Zerstörung: Bemerkungen zu Augustinus Niphus' Kommentar zur "Destructio destructionum" des Averroes' in F. Niewöhner and L. Sturlese (ed.), *Averroes im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance* (Zurich, 1994), pp. 291–308. On Nifo and Neoplatonism, see E.P. Mahoney, 'Agostino Nifo and Neoplatonism' in P. Prini (ed.), *Il neoplatonismo nel Rinascimento* (Rome, 1993), pp. 205–31 reprinted in E.P. Mahoney, *Two Aristotelians of the Italian Renaissance*, VI. On Nifo and Aquinas, see E.P. Mahoney, 'Agostino Nifo and Saint Thomas Aquinas', *Memorie Domenicane*, n.s., 7 (1976), pp. 195–226 reprinted in E.P. Mahoney, *Two Aristotelians of the Italian Renaissance*, XI.

¹³ On Nifo's attitude to Plato and Aristotle, see E.P. Mahoney, 'Plato and Aristotle in the Thought of Agostino Nifo' in G. Roccato (ed.), *Platonismo e aristotelismo nel mezzogiorno d'Italia (secc. xiv–xvi)* (Palermo, 1989), pp. 79–101.

dedicated to the insignificant rulers of his small native town of Sessa. The book, however, was a radically different creation from his *De regnandi peritia*. The *Libellus* was a typical humanist advice-book. Nifo drew precepts from an array of classical sources, including Aristophanes, Aristotle, Anaxagoras, Cicero, Democritus, Diogenes Laertius, Euripides, Hesiod, Homer, Horace, Isocrates, Julius Caesar, Livy, Pindar, Plato, Plutarch, Ptolemy, Pythagoras, Quintillian, Socrates, Theocritus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Zeno. The book listed the traditional virtues necessary to a prince, namely prudence, justice, wisdom, modesty, mercy, innocence, clemency, piety, humanity, affability, honesty, liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, fortitude, temperance, the love of letters, arts, music, and sports, the knowledge of history and eloquence. Nifo followed the Platonic principle that the ‘prince ought not to concern himself with his own good, but with the common good’.¹⁴ And even the potentially slippery concept of prudence, in the Aristotelian sense of *phronesis*, was understood to be ‘that whereby we are able to pursue right reason and avoid bad judgement’.¹⁵ The whole object of princely government was the promise of everlasting glory, memory, and beatitude, very different to Machiavelli’s more secular aspiration of maintaining the state.

Nifo was, however, already an accomplished plagiarist by the time he wrote the *De regnandi peritia*. His *De intellectu*, for example, was discreetly coloured with words from Ficino and Albert the Great.¹⁶ The preface to his second commentary *On the Soul* had words and phrases lifted from Cardinal Bessarion’s (1403–72) *In calumniatorem Platonis* (*Against the Calumniators of Plato*) of 1459.¹⁷ His *De rege et tyranno* was a plagiarism of Poggio Bracciolini’s

¹⁴ Nifo, *Libellus his quae ab optimis principibus agenda sunt* in *Opuscula politica*, p. 95: ‘Optimus princeps, ut ait Plato, sic beatam civium vitam sibi praeponere debet, ut sit civitas virtute honesta, gloria ampla, copiis locuples, opibus firma... Unde Plato, principi non proprium bonum, sed publicum cogitandum.’ On late medieval discussions of the common good, see M.S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford, 1999).

¹⁵ Nifo, *Libellus*, pp. 97–8: ‘Proinde nisi eius actiones sua prudentia metiretur, (cum prudentia virtus sit, qua quidem recta ratione bona prosequi, malaque evitare possumus) quonam pacto adversa fugere, prosperaque complecti optimus ipse princeps poterit? Deinde prudentia ampla virtus est, quippe quae non ad se solum sed etiam ad alios extenditur, quo quidem nihil optimo principi convenientius esse potest.’

¹⁶ On Nifo’s plagiarism of Ficino and Albert the Great in *De intellectu*, see L. Spruit, ‘Introduction’ in Agostino Nifo, *De intellectu*, pp. 13–7, p. 14.

¹⁷ On Nifo’s plagiarism of Bessarion, see E.P. Mahoney, ‘Plato and Aristotle in the Thought of Agostino Nifo’ in *Two Aristotelians of the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 96–7.

(1380–1459) *De infelictate principum* (*On the Unhappiness of Princes*) of 1440.¹⁸ Plagiarism was not an academic offence in the Renaissance. Words and ideas were often used without acknowledgment if redeployed for a different purpose or recast in a new form.¹⁹ Machiavelli lifted precepts from classical sources without acknowledging them in his *The Art of War* of 1520.²⁰ Portions of Nifo's own *De regnandi peritia* were used without acknowledgement by the humanist Lucio Paolo Rosello (1490–1556) in his *Il ritratto del vero governo del principe* (*Portrait of the True Government of the Prince*) of 1552.²¹ Portions of *De pulchro et amore* were plundered by the reformist and humanist Antonio Brucioli (1498–1566) and recast in his *Dialogi della morale filosofia* (*Dialogues on Moral Philosophy*) of 1526–44.²² Portions of Nifo's *De demonibus* (*On Demons*) of 1503 were lifted by a Bernardus Portinarius (unknown) and reproduced without acknowledgement in his *Disputationes de daemonibus* (*Disputations on Demons*) of around 1510.²³

Giuseppe Ferrari was the first to uncover Nifo's debt to Machiavelli in his *Corso sugli scrittori politici italiani* of 1862.²⁴ Luigi Settembrini later suggested in his *Lezioni di letteratura italiana* of 1866–72 that both Machiavelli and Nifo might have borrowed from Isocrates's *Philippus*.²⁵ Gennaro Monarca raised the unlikely possibility that it was Machiavelli who plagiarised Nifo in his *Agostino Nifo vita e opere* of 1975.²⁶ Most scholars since Ferrari, though, such as Jean Nourrisson, Francesco Fiorentino, Oreste Tommasini, Pasquale Villari, Laurence Burd, Tommaso Persico, Oreste Ferrara, Giuseppe Valletta, Giuseppe Prezzolini,

¹⁸ On Nifo's plagiarism of Bracciolini, see D. Canfora, 'Il "De rege et tyranno" di Agostino Nifo e il "De infelicitate principum" di Poggio Bracciolini', *Critica letteraria*, 27 (1999), pp. 455–68. Note that Nifo wrote the *De rege et tyranno* after his *De regnandi peritia*.

¹⁹ On plagiarism in the Renaissance, see the essays collected in R. Gigliucci (ed.), *Furto e plagio nella letteratura del classicismo* (Rome, 1998) and H. Bjørnstad (ed.), *Borrowed Feathers: Plagiarism and the Limits of Imitation in Early Modern Europe* (Oslo, 2008).

²⁰ On Machiavelli's sources in *The Art of War*, see L.A. Burd, 'Le fonti letterarie di Machiavelli nell'Arte della guerra', *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, 5th series, 4 (1897), pp. 187–261.

²¹ On Rosello's plagiarism of Nifo, see S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: The First Century. Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 80–4.

²² On Brucioli's plagiarism of Nifo, see Antonio Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. A. Landi (Chicago, Ill., 1982), pp. 352–61.

²³ On Portinarius's plagiarism of Nifo, see L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (8 vols., New York, N.Y., 1923–58), v, pp. 69–93. Thorndike mentions the plagiarism only in passing. Portinarius's *Disputationes de daemonibus* is available at <http://www.internetculturale.it/opencms/opencms/it/index.html> (accessed 25 August 2015).

²⁴ G. Ferrari, *Corso sugli scrittori politici italiani* (Milan, 1862), p. 338.

²⁵ L. Settembrini, *Lezioni di letteratura italiana* (3 vols., Naples, 1877–83), ii, p. 171.

²⁶ G. Monarca, *Agostino Nifo vita ed opere*, pp. 60–70.

Giuliano Procacci, Luigi Firpo, Carlo Dionisotti, and Peter Godman have agreed that Nifo's *De regnandi peritia* is a plagiarism of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.²⁷ Only Paola Cosentino and Sydney Anglo, in recent times, have attempted to rescue Nifo's book from the charge by closely examining Nifo's re-writing and, in Anglo's case, by rebranding it as a work of creative plagiarism and remoralisation of *The Prince*.²⁸ There are good reasons for this: Nifo slices and dices Machiavelli's chapters, re-organising them in four books under new headings and dropping the more contentious axioms of chapters 15 and 24 to 26 in ways that radically alters the Machiavellian character of the whole text; he reclaims the Platonic-Aristotelian distinction between kingship and tyranny blurred in the opening chapter of *The Prince*; and sketches a portrait of the ideal ruler in book V of the *De regnandi peritia* that flies in the face of Machiavelli's political realism. The work is in essence a sophisticated piece of early-modern censorship and marks the first instance in the long history of Machiavellianism or anti-Machiavellianism.

My intention in this chapter is to explain why Nifo plagiarised *The Prince*. I believe the answer lies as much with Nifo's treatment of Aristotle as with his remodelling of Machiavelli. Since Procacci's *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* of 1965, scholars have focused almost exclusively on qualifying Nifo's debt to Machiavelli and have neglected the Aristotelian dimension of his *De regnandi peritia*. Anglo mentions Nifo's Machiavellisation of Aristotle but fails to expand on it. Cornel Zwierlein has offered some fresh insights into the relationship

²⁷ J. Nourrisson, *Machiavel: l'histoire du Machiavélisme et de Machiavel* (Paris, 1875); F. Fiorentino, 'Del *Principe* di N. Machiavelli e di un libro di A. Nifo', *Giornale di filosofia e lettere, scienza e politiche*, n.s. 1 (1879), pp. 94–114; O. Tommasini, *La vita e gli scritti di Niccolò Machiavelli nella loro relazione col machiavellismo* (2 vols., Rome, 1883–1911), ii, pp. 137–9; P. Villari, *Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi* (3 vols., Florence, 1877–82), ii, pp. 416–9; L.A. Burd, 'Introduction' in Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, ed. L.A. Burd (Oxford, 1891), pp. 43–5; T. Persico, *Gli scrittori politici napoletani dal 1400 al 1700* (Naples, 1912); O. Ferrara, *Machiavelli* (Milan, 1930), pp. 242–7; G. Valletta, 'Il *Principe* di Machiavelli e il *De regnandi peritia* di Agostino Nifo', *Annali della facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Napoli*, 1 (1951), pp. 137–56; G. Prezzolini, *Machiavelli, anticristo* (Rome, 1954), p. 271; G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome, 1965); L. Firpo, 'Le origini dell'anti-machiavellismo', *Il Pensiero Politico*, 2nd series, 3 (1969), pp. 337–67, pp. 349–52; C. Dionisotti, *Machiavellerie: storia e fortuna di Machiavelli* (Turin, 1980); P. Godman, *From Poliziano to Machiavelli: Florentine Humanism in the High Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J., 1998), pp. 250–5.

²⁸ P. Cosentino, 'Un plagio del "Principe": il "De regnandi peritia" di Agostino Nifo' in R. Gigliucci (ed.), *Furto e plagio*, pp. 139–60; S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: The First Century*, pp. 42–83.

between Nifo's theory of science, rhetoric, and politics and Machiavelli's method.²⁹ But all seem to have missed a point. My intention is to offer a brief overview of Nifo's plagiarism and then explore his repeated (mis-) use of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* rather than the *Politics*. My contention is that the *De regnandi peritia* was not just a remoralisation of *The Prince* as most scholars have argued, but that it was also a concerted attempt to rescue Aristotle from Machiavelli. The perceived relationship between Aristotle's tyrant and Machiavelli's prince had obvious effects on the interpretation of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance. Aristotle was no longer the propounder of what James Hankins referred to as 'virtue politics'. Aristotle was also a source of Machiavellianism. My aim is to show how one Renaissance author dealt with this and what broader conclusions may be drawn from it.

II. MACHIAVELLI SCHOLASTICISED

Nifo's *De regnandi peritia* opens with the dedication to Charles V.³⁰ The letter is key, as is the title of his book. Nifo is writing to someone who descends from a long line of kings and emperors with vested interests in Italy.³¹ His aim, in his own words, was to spur the horse that is already galloping and, in a passage that strongly echoes the preface of Machiavelli's *The Prince* to Lorenzo de' Medici (1492–1519), to outline what can be found in ancient and modern histories and what may be deduced from the wars in Italy.³² Nifo's emphasis is on the

²⁹ C. Zwierlein, 'Politik als Experimental wissenschaft, 1521–1526: Agostino Nifos politische Schriften als Synthese von Aristotelismus und machiavellischem *Discorso*', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 113 (2006), pp. 30–62.

³⁰ Nifo had already dedicated a work on the false prognostication of a fool to Charles V. On the *De falsa diluvii divinatione*, see L. Thorndike, 'That Agostino Nifo's *De falsa diluvii prognosticatione* was not published until Dec. 24, 1519', *Romanic Review*, 26 (1935), pp. 118–21; L. Thorndike, 'The First Edition of Nifo's *De falsa diluvii prognosticatione*', *Romanic Review*, 27 (1936), pp. 27–8; L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, v, pp. 159–77.

³¹ Charles inherited the Crown of Aragon in 1516, which included the Kingdom of Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia as well as the Duchy of Milan. Milan, however, had fallen to France in 1515. Charles succeeded in recapturing it in 1522 but lost it again in 1524 before recapturing it once more in 1525. On Charles V, see K. Brandi and C.V. Wedgwood, *The Emperor Charles V: The Growth and Destiny of a Man and of a World-Empire* (London, 1939); W.P. Blockmans, *Emperor Charles 1500–1558* (London, 2002).

³² Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, preface: 'Quanquam enim tibi, ex tot regum ac imperatorum serie ortum ducenti, naturalis fere atque germana regnandi peritia est, tamen, ut (quod in proverbio dicitur) currenti equo claria adderem, ea omnia, quae in veteribus historiarum literis notata deprehendimus et quae a iunioribus historicis fideliter enarrata invenimus et quae ex tot bellis, quae per tot annos in Italia

experience of governing, as the title *De regnandi peritia* suggests. Contrary to scholastic mirrors-for-princes and his own earlier humanist advice-book on the prince, Nifo's *De regnandi peritia* is replete with modern examples, most of which are borrowed from *The Prince*.³³ His mission is simple: 'just as poisons and antidotes are explained in medical works, so you will find here not only tyrannical but kingly deeds briefly explained, so that you may flee the former and follow the latter'.³⁴ Nifo's focus is on wicked deeds, not moral acts. He reclaims the distinction between kingship and tyranny wholly absent in *The Prince*, but keeps his focus on the *facinora*, that is evil deeds or crimes that define and distinguish kings from tyrants.³⁵

The first book is short and centres on new princes. Nifo begins in true Machiavellian fashion by mentioning the dichotomy between republics and principalities but quickly draws a more pertinent distinction between monarchies. 'For when one rules, either he attends to his own good and to the common good of his subjects, which the Greek called *basiliam* and our Romans call *regnum*, or he attends to his own good, which the Greek called *tyrannidem* and our Romans call *dominationem*.'³⁶ The distinction is Aristotelian, as is the ensuing classification of republics, aside from monarchies and tyrannies, into aristocracies, tribunes, democracies, and oligarchies. Nifo's choice of words is sophisticated. *Basiliam*, unlike *monarchia*, is less vague in describing kingship since monarchy applies to any monocracy (literally, 'rule by one') and *demarchia*, unlike *politeia*, refers to the head of a local group or district rather than just any form

gesta sunt, didicimus, veritus non sum ad te scribere.' Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. P. Bondanella and M. Viroli (Oxford, 2005), pp. 5–6.

³³ On Nifo's use of Machiavelli's examples, see P. Larivaille, 'Index des noms de personnes et de personnages cités à la fois dans the *Prince* et dans *L'Art de régner*' in Agostino Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, pp. 357–60.

³⁴ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, preface: 'Invenies enim in his tum tyrannica, tum regia facinora breviter explicata, veluti in medicorum literis venena et antidota: illa quidem ut fugias, haec vero ut prosequaris.'

³⁵ I agree with Anglo here that Pernet-Beau is missing the point or at least obscuring the meaning of Nifo's words. 'Facinorous', though archaic, is still used in English today as an adjective to describe something extremely wicked. The word *facinus* in Latin is used to describe any deed, but especially a misdeed or crime. See S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: The First Century*, p. 48.

³⁶ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 1.1: 'At ubi unus imperitat, aut is et sibi et subditis commune bonum procurat, quam dominationem Graeci *basiliam*, nostri *regnum* vocarunt; aut proprium, quam illi *tyrannidem*, Romani proprie *dominationem* dixerunt. Licet iam in usum venerit ut *dominatio* pro quovis principatu.'

of government. In his own words, *democratia* applies to a broad-based government with its own army and no mercenaries and *demarchia* to *democratia* but without the army.³⁷

Nifo's emphasis, as would be expected, is on monarchies in the broad sense of the word, that is monocracies. He follows Machiavelli in immediately drawing a distinction between hereditary states and newly acquired non-hereditary states, that is either wholly new or as an appendix to an established hereditary monarchy, such as Francesco Sforza's (1401–66) Milan or Ferdinand II of Aragon's (1452–1516) Southern Kingdom in Spain respectively.³⁸ Nifo's historical narrative of the different means whereby new princes acquire a principality opens with a discussion of the origins of monarchies and a negative view of human nature reminiscent of Machiavelli. Nifo appeals to both the Ciceronian view of man's innate appetite for rule found in the *De officiis* (*On Duties*) and biblical theology to describe mankind's corrupt state, that is his penchant for fraud, treachery, enmity, theft, slaughter, infighting, and wickedness.³⁹ Rule, for Nifo, is born out pride.⁴⁰ Some rise to it by virtue,

³⁷ The term *demarchy* nowadays generally signifies an ideal democracy with an equal law for all. See Friedrich Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (3 vols., Chicago, Ill., 1973–9), iii, p. 40. The word, however, used to signify the office of a tribune or deme. The only use of the term *demarchia* in Greek literature is in Plutarch, *Anthony* in *Parallel Lives*, ed. B. Perrin (11 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1914–26), ix, 8.3. The term *demarchos* appears far more often, that is in several of Plutarch's biographies, although it appears only once in Aristotle, in *The Athenian Constitution*, ed. P.J. Rhodes (London, 2004), 21.5 and 54.8. Note that *The Athenian Constitution* was only discovered in 1871 and edited in 1891 and it was therefore not included in the Bekker edition, let alone mentioned in the Renaissance.

³⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 1.1: 'Sed, praetermissis iis dominationibus quibus plures praesunt, eam prosequemur quam *monarchiam*, hoc est *unius principatum*, dicunt; eum principaliter intendimus... Novus vero, aut penitus novus est, qualis Hieroni Syracusanorum atque Francisco Sfortiae Mediolanensium principatus omnino novus fuit; aut novus est non quidem omni ex parte, sed uti novum admodum membrum haereditario alicui principatui annexum, ut Baeticum regnum Hispaniarum regno ab Catholico rege Ferdinando avo tuo incluto connexum est.' Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 7–8.

³⁹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 1.2: 'Postea vero unde monarchiae ortae et quot modis acquisitae sint deducamus. Nam etsi natura nobis dominandi appetitum Cicero insitum esse asserat, tamen in principio non ex Prometheo (ut est in fabulis), sed ex summo omnium rerum opifice Deo tam mirabili sapientia tamque praestatnti dignitate homo conditus est, mandatumque accipiens et ipsum spernens, neglexit imperium. Namque nimium sui amans, iam immemor effectus unde formatus esset, ratus se maiore dignum gradu, elato animo contra opificem suum in superbiam se erexit. Quo sano uno ruente, caeterorum progenitore ac parente, reliquos omnes, qui ex eo uti ex prima radice manarunt, ruere ac labi necesse fuit; sicque tam gravi pexxati mole depressum ac in terram demersum hominum genus ob vulnus ab uno inflictum, proclive ad scelera omnia ac pronum, paulatim omni se flagitio contaminavit atque infecit. Hinc fraudes, hinc doli, hinc inimicitiae, hinc rapinae, hinc caedes, hinc contentiones, hinc scelera omnia ac regnandi cupido irruerunt.' Cicero, *De officiis*, ed. W. Miller (Cambridge, Mass., 1913), 1.4.13. Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 58.

⁴⁰ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 1.2: 'Postea vero, cum per diluvium totum humanum genus esset abolitum, ut delerentur hominum scelera, licet rudes gentes remansissent, tamen superbia, quae humano generi fere cognata erat, hominibus et gentibus in universo terrarum orbe multiplicatis, iterum vires accepit, e qua omnia hominum scelera rursus emergerunt, potissimum ea regnandi cupiditas, quae ex ipsa superbia primum nascitur.'

others by either fortune, wickedness, arms, fraud, factions, sedition, the favour of citizens, election, or succession.⁴¹ In much the same way as Machiavelli, Nifo deals with these methods *seriatim*, with special emphasis on the state acquired through wickedness in a way that is little or no different from Machiavelli's. Following the Florentine Second Chancellor, Nifo's two models are Agathocles and Oliverotto da Fermo (1475–1502).⁴²

The second book deals with the means of preserving states from foreign enemies and is largely a reworking of chapters 12, 13, 14 and 20 of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Nifo focuses largely on military matters, weighing up the pros and cons of employing mercenary, auxiliary, mixed, and one's own troops.⁴³ Following Aristotle and Machiavelli, he declares mercenaries useless: 'they are mutinous, factious, and disloyal. They neither worry much about their honour nor their reputation'.⁴⁴ Italy's capitulation to the French army stands as testament. Like Machiavelli, Nifo sees Florence and Venice as exceptions: 'it was not prudence but fate or some kind of fortune that enriched and protected them'.⁴⁵ Those who use mercenaries are slaves to fortune. Italy's city-states only came to employ them as the Holy Roman Emperor's grasp on Italy weakened, the papacy's temporal ambitions expanded, and the citizens' military inexperience came to the fore.⁴⁶ But if, on the face of it, mercenary troops seem to be the worst military solution for a prince, they are in fact better than auxiliaries, that is allied forces. Nifo keeps to Machiavelli's words closely when saying that auxiliaries are the most

⁴¹ Ibid., 1.2: 'Hinc ad monarchias variis modis homines pervenerunt. Nam alii virtute, alii fortuna, alii sceleribus, alii armis, alii dolo, alii factione, alii seditione, alii civium favore, alii electione, alii denique successionem ad regium sceptrum ascenderunt seque extulerunt.'

⁴² Ibid., 1.5. Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 30–4. More generally, see Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 1.3–6 and Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 20–34.

⁴³ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.1: 'Procedimus autem in omnibus more nostro peripatetico'.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 2.3: 'Divisione hac praetermissa, dicamus quod mercenarii milites (ut mihi videtur) in bellis parum aut nihil prosint, nec pro regnorum defensione nec invasione satis utiles sint. Sunt enim discordes, factiosi plerumque infedele, nec multum de proprio honore ac nomine solliciti.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 42–6; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1116b15–17; Aristotle, *Politics*, 1306a20–32.

⁴⁵ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.4: 'Si quis autem adversus ea quae diximus Florentinos et Venetos obiiceret, qui mercenario milite suas res publicas locupletarunt et tutati sunt, respondebimus id non eorum prudentia, sed fato quodam aut fortuna factum esse, tum finitimorum invidia ac Italiae discordia ac seditionibus, quae eorum gliscentibus rebus maxime vigerunt.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 44.

⁴⁶ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.5: 'Sed quoniam modo ad illos Italia pervenerit non est difficile exponere. Nam, postquam Romanus imperator, qui in Germania eligitur ob causas quas alibi fortasse dicemus, vires suas in Italia imminuere coepit pontificumque ambitio a sacris ad imperia inhiavit, ac ob factionum capita viribus aucta est, multae res publicae pontificis favore multi quoque novi principatus exorti sunt... Et cum tam sacerdotes quam cives imbelles atque armis inassueti essent, externos ad stipendia conduxerunt.'

useless and dangerous sort of army. ‘For, if one loses with them, one has no troops of one’s own to help one regain one’s state and, if one wins with them, one remains under the rule of he who sent those troops in the first place.’⁴⁷ Mixed troops are less dangerous and useless than mercenaries but not as useful as one’s own army. Nifo’s predilection for a standing army drawn from a country’s own citizenry is again in keeping with Machiavelli.⁴⁸

Halfway through the second book, Nifo employs Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* to move his focus from a comparison of mercenary, auxiliary, mixed, and citizen troops to the prerequisites for warfare. Following Aristotle word for word, Nifo argues that one must know everything about one’s own troops, that is their number, structure, and their commanders, as well as the military history of enemies and neighbouring countries since similar events produce similar conclusions.⁴⁹ Nifo once again stresses the importance of having a standing army made of one’s own citizens before turning to the question of how a prince should maintain military prowess in times of peace.⁵⁰ Following Machiavelli, he rejects the idea of war as the only means whereby princes can maintain military proficiency. Games, hunting, and oratory are useful substitutes in times of peace.⁵¹ But there is a clear sense in which Nifo’s discussion on

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.6: ‘Post haec de auxiliariis militibus dicamus, praesertim de iis qui ab aliquo potentiori in auxilium minus potentis mittuntur. Hi sunt periculosiores. Nam si is, ad quem mittuntur, ab hostibus exuperaretur, inermis penitus derelingeretur, nec habebit unde possit rursus vires assumere. Sin autem suos hostes experaverit, in eius potestate manebit qui auxilia misit.’ See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 47.

⁴⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.7: ‘Quod autem mixti ex propriis atque mercennariis militibus minus his pollentes sint, qui proprii, testatur Carolus VII, Gallorum rex’. See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 47–50.

⁴⁹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.9: ‘Aristoteles itaque, philosophorum princeps, in *Rhetoricorum magnorum* libris, has quatuor esse ostendit, sine quibus dux nullus nisi temere victoriam assequi poterit. Prima quidem, ut non ignoret copias, et quantae in praesentia sint et qua maximae esse possint... Secunda deinceps consideratio ex his civitatis gestis colligitur quae in bellis adnotata sunt... Tertia est ut de finitimis haec eadem considerentur, ut quantae sint finitimorum copiae quantaeque esse possint et quales... Demum et quarto, ad haec scire pertinet bellorum eventus non modo proprii regni, hostium atque finitimorum, verum etiam aliorum quorumcunque; similia enim a similibus fieri consueverunt.’

⁵⁰ Ibid., 2.10: ‘Praeterea, princeps qui sine armis vitam ducit, inter alia mala quae ipsi contingunt, hoc potissimum est, quod ab omnibus veluti deiectus contemnitur; nam inter ipsum et armatum principem ea ratio est, quae inter nudum inermem et vestitum armatum esse videtur. Nullus enim nudum inermem veretur, vestitum armatum quilibet magni facit.’ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1359b–1360a.

⁵¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.11: ‘Se non parva ex his quaestio exoritur. Si enim semper militiae princeps vacare debet, tunc eius vita semper in bellis versari deberet, quare pax non erit bellorum finis. Accedit ad haec quod actiones bellicae (ut Aristoteles inquit) non propter se ipsas expetibiles sint. Sed haec dubitatio (ut mihi videtur) eo contingit quod rudes arbitrentur aut principem rebus pacis studeat non oportere, aut in pace principem non posse militiae studiis incumbere. Nos autem principes qui in pace sunt bifariam militiae studiis operam dare posse asserimus, opere atque mente. Opere quidem rursus bifariam: aut per ludos... Insuper aut per venationes... Nam per plana aut montes aut valles aut flumina aut paludes cum suis ambulans bellicos casus semper ipsis proponebat... Unde casus omnes qui

armies and military aptitude is but a springboard into a discussion of whether a prince should disarm his citizens or not, foster factions or not, cherish his enemies or not, win them over or not, build fortresses or not.⁵² Machiavelli had argued that a new prince in a new principality should always give arms to the citizen but when a new state is joined to an old one like an appendage, then he should disarm them, except for those who have been partisans in his acquisition.⁵³ Nifo again employs the distinction between king and tyrant to argue somewhat differently that he should arm his citizens unless he is a tyrant at which point disarming them is necessary.⁵⁴ Factions, for Nifo as for Machiavelli, are deemed problematic, for though they may be useful in times of peace they weaken and endanger a state in war.⁵⁵ Enemies, again following Machiavelli, are seen as challenges to be overcome rather than as threats to be suppressed.⁵⁶ And like Machiavelli, Nifo warns of the motives and ambitions that drive a prince's friends and allies, and he concludes the second book with an argument against the value of fortresses to both tyrants and princes as well as a brief note on the places that need to be safeguarded which, once again, refers back to the *Rhetoric*.⁵⁷

in bello contingere solent semper cum suis acerrime disserebat sicque, eorum opiniones colligendo et suam disputando, adeo meliores menti mandabat, ut nihil periculosi atque inopini in bello evenire posset quin paratum remedium atque promptum haberet. Hunc modum declamatores servant qui in ficto themate se exercent.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 50–2.

⁵² Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.12. See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 72–5.

⁵³ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 72–3.

⁵⁴ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.13: 'Hinc magna disceptatio vertitur, an arma auferenda vel addenda subditis sint... Si quidem principatus omnino novus est, minus malum est eos qui a regni principio hostes erant armis munire, qui vero amici, in eorum armis ipsos servare... At si novus sit, sed antiquo annexus, tunc reges qui imperitant aut tyrannice aut iuste dominantur. Si tyrannice, ab his arma mox auferenda sunt qui a regni principio hostes fuerunt... Si vero iuste imperaverint, quia studendum est ut omnes tam qui a principio hostes quam suspectos benevolos sibi faciat, arma auferenda non sunt, sed, beneficiorum collatione et honoribus, ex infensis amici reddendi sunt.'

⁵⁵ Ibid., 2.14: 'Deinde si factionibus principatus servari possit disserendum est... Hic modus (ut mihi videtur), dum externorum hostium metus non est potest concedi; at si potens aliquis rex aut princeps vicinus hostis immineat, hic modus frivolus et periculosus.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 73.

⁵⁶ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.15: 'Et licet eo libellos quem de inimicis scripsimus multa de re hac disseruimus, tamen quantum proposito nostro convenit dicamus: princeps tunc magnos putari cum difficultates vincunt, et quo maiores superant, eo maiores existimari; non ergo delendi inimici sunt, sed permittendi, modo exuperentur.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 73–4.

⁵⁷ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.16: 'Princeps igitur qui principatum novum aggreditur quemque viribus servare studet eos inspectare debet per quos ad principatum venit et quam ob causam ipsius fautores fuerunt. Si enim illius rei causa non naturalis affectio fuerit, sed quod sub priore principe non bene subdebantur, perdifficile profecto erit eos in amicitia diu conservare: non enim eis eo usque placere poterit, ut pro eorum cupiditatibus omnino satisfaciatur.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 74. Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.17: 'Ego vero nec in libero nec in subiecto regno arces utiles aut necessarias esse arbitror; nam si interdum casu aut fortuna aut pro temporum ratione principi utiles fuerint, plerumque obfuisse legimus'; Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.18. See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 75.

The third book deals with the means by which princes and tyrants avoid revolutions and is a reworking of chapters 2 to 10 of *The Prince*. Nifo, once more, closely follows Machiavelli throughout, insisting on the preservation of justice and mores for the safeguarding of a republic or principality.⁵⁸ A new principality conquered with a king's own army and annexed to a more ancient state can be secured in one of several ways. If the principality shares institutions, language, and customs with the old state, it is wise simply to eradicate the previous rulers and maintain those shared institutions, language, and customs.⁵⁹ If, however, they do not share these, a prince may either move to the new principality, send colonies there and bestow the property of his enemies on them, or ensure that no one as powerful or more powerful than him rule the new state.⁶⁰ Nifo, like Machiavelli, is critical of Louis XII's (1462 – 1515) foreign policy.⁶¹ Slave states, he argues, are harder to acquire but easier to keep whereas *dominica* or principalities are easier to acquire but harder to keep.⁶² Thus the question is how one ought to maintain such states, especially when their people are accustomed to live freely.

⁵⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.1: 'Naturalis igitur princeps qui haereditaria successione imperitat facile ab insultibus atque rebellionibus regnum praeservare poterit, modo nefandas iniurias subditis non intulerit nec novis legibus, quibus insueti sunt coartaverit.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 7–8.

⁵⁹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.2: 'Pro remediis igitur quibus novi principes nova regna conservarunt, primo assumamus quod, cum nova regna antiquioribus suis coniunxerint, ea aut sunt cum antiquioribus regnis moribus et genere et idiomate convenientia, aut non. Cum vero sint convenientia, facile illa servari posse historici dixerunt, praesertim si populi antea semper regibus parere soliti sunt. Duobus enim modis tantum regnum servandum esse asserunt, et rege et omnis ipsius regia prosapia penitus extincta, et servatis iis legibus, iis consitutionibus, eo ordine atque his honoribus quibus vivere sub priori rege consueverunt.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 9–10.

⁶⁰ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.2: 'At si nova regna alteri connectantur, quod genere, idiomate ac moribus ab illis differat, reges non facile ea servare poterunt quae parva manu acquisierunt... Haec ergo remedia afferuntur ab historicis, ut rex ipse novum regnum colat atque inhabitet; sic enim tute imperitabit nec aliquis subditorum rebellionem aut prodicionem facere audebit. Praeterea beneficia quae ex regis praesentia subditi reportabunt compellent eos in regem non mali quicquam machinari, sed diligere atque vereri: habent enim ante oculos praesens id quod et ament et vereantur... Secundum vero remedium, licet tyrannicum sit, est ad novum regnum colonias mittere, ad quas eorum subditorum bona conferantur qui regi suspecti sunt; suspectos vero aut ad tutiora sui prioris regni loca transferre aut ipsos viribus expoliatos relinquere... Aliud autem remedium quod rursus afferunt, et quidem pollutissimum, est ut rex ea in regione externum nullum aut conterraneum potentem aut aequalem aut potentiorum regnare permittat.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 10–1.

⁶¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.3: 'Hinc Ludovici, Gallorum regis, errata notantur.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 13–6.

⁶² Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.4: 'Nam "servile" regnum, quale Persarum diximus esse, obtineri difficillimum atque maxime arduum est, siquidem ab eius rege propriis atque peculiaribus armis defenditur. Collis vero militibus qui regi proprii atque familiares erant, facile possidentur, potissimum prioris regis linea extincta; haec enim duo pro illius regni secura possessione satis sunt... "Dominicum" vero contra obtineri enim facile atque perleve est: causa autem quoniam non omnes nobiles regi pariter acquiescunt atque obediunt, sed alii semper ut suspecti, alii ut laesi conqueruntur. His ergo externo regi favorem praestantibus facile regnum a proprio rege deficit atque amittitur. Id autem quod arduum videtur est ipsum conservare.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 16–8.

Nifo rehearses for the most part the policies outlined above, ostensibly revising though the morally dubious Roman practice mentioned by Machiavelli of eliminating hostile illustrious men by arguing that one should subsequently slowly moderate one's rule so as to win over the hearts of everyone.⁶³ Faithfully following Machiavelli again, Nifo argues that those who acquire a state by virtue alone, with or without an army, struggle at first but then hold it easily, whereas those who acquire it by fortune win it easily but lose it suddenly unless they marry fortune with virtue.⁶⁴

Halfway through the third book Nifo enters well-known Machiavellian territory. Closely following the Florentine secretary, Nifo states that whoever acquires a state by wicked means must learn to perform evil deeds all at once and good deeds bit by bit so that the good ones stick longer in people's memory.⁶⁵ Nifo is recommending the familiar shift in tyranny from overtly hostile to deceptively friendly epitomised in *The Prince* by Agathocles.⁶⁶ But how does one hold a state by fraud? Once again, Nifo borrows Machiavelli's example of Cesare Borgia's cunning to describe how one first appoints a cruel governor and then removes him so as to appear moderate and benevolent.⁶⁷ Nifo's attention, though, quickly shifts to the *civilis*

⁶³ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.5: 'Romani huius modi principatus aliqua ex parte imminuerunt, ut ferociiores et rebelles deponendo atque omnes qui roboris quicquam haberent infirmando... Procedente vero tempore, caeteris qui remanserunt iustitiam servando, beneficiorum collatione paulatim eorum animos molliendo atque afficiendo, pristinae libertatis tandem obliti, eos diligere atque venerari coeperunt.' Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 19–20.

⁶⁴ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.6: 'Sed utcunque sit, qui per virtutem novis omnino regnis potiri enituntur, principium durum habent propter novos ordines atque leges quibus regnum instituunt. Nihil enim attentatu difficilius, nihil factu magis ambiguum nihilque ordinatu periculosius est, quam ordines, ritus, leges promulgare populis quibus illi vivere nunquam assueti erant... Verum ubi sceptro potiti sunt beneque rexerint, sine difficultate regna propter virtutis lucem possident ac servant.'; Ibid., 3.7: 'Qui vero fortuna solum favente ex privatis reges evadunt, facile quidem tolluntur, repente vero ruunt: nam ludens fortuna aliquibus plerumque initium facile, finem vero perdifficilem facit.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 20–30.

⁶⁵ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.8: 'Est enim tyrannicum praeceptum ut malum totum simul, bonum autem paulatim fiat.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 30–4.

⁶⁶ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.8: 'Agathocles ergo omnes potentes cives qui vel in praesens vel in futurum officere poterant substulit, postea in dies beneficia conferendo iis quorum parentes aut cognatos iniuriis affecit, animos delinivit atque temperavit, et tandem beneficiorum cumulo ad benivolentiam deduxit.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 33–4.

⁶⁷ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.9: 'Cesare vero Borgia, Alexandri VI pontificis maximi filius, cum in Umbria, quam vi armorum sibi subiecerat, infinitos inimicos, hostes atque suspectos, seditiosos atque magnis factionibus divisos invenisset, ut eos ad pacem atque obedientiam reduceret, ibi Rimirum Orchensem, virum crudelem, truculentum atque expeditum, gubernatorem constituit, cui, quum omnem potestatem prae buisset, mandavit ut inimicos, hostes atque omnes suos suspectos deleret qui regionis tranquillitatem turbarent... Cesenae itaque advocatis omnibus quos ille iniuria affecerat auditisque eorum querimoniis perlectisque libellis ut cunctis patefaceret eam crudelitatem non ex sua

vero dominus, that is the civic prince who comes to rule through the favour of either noblemen or the people.⁶⁸ Following Machiavelli, he argues that he who comes to rule through the favour of the noblemen has a harder time holding on to the state, since his peers will rarely submit to his will and conflicts of interest often ensue, whereas he who comes to rule through the favour of the people has an easier job as long as he appeases the people.⁶⁹ So, in agreement with Machiavelli, he suggests that it is better to stand with the many than with the few.⁷⁰ These civic princes, being un-elected and non-hereditary, are threatened when they strive to move from civic tyranny to absolute tyranny, as epitomised by Caesar.⁷¹ Nifo ends the third book describing how a civic prince can defend his rule from foreign enemies by either fortifying the city, as long as his people are loyal to him or he builds his own citizen army.⁷²

The fourth book, which treats of the virtues and vices of the prince, forms the kernel of Nifo's *De regnandi peritia* and is a reworking of chapters 16 to 23 of *The Prince*. Nifo immediately dives into the question of liberality, drawing an Aristotelian distinction between liberality as prodigality and liberality in the true sense of the word, that is giving to each their due and not taking more than is owed.⁷³ His attention, however, soon turns to cruelty and

sed ministri mente ortam esse, in conspectu omnium, evaginato gladio, Rimirum ipsum manu propria transfixit. Hinc tantam a subditis qui remanserunt benivolentiam comparavit, ut ad nostra tempora adhuc eius nomen celebretur.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 27.

⁶⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.10: 'In civitate fere omni duo hominum genera sunt: et nobilium, qui semper popularibus dominari appetunt, et popularium, qui appetunt nihil praeter quam non opprimi nec aliqua in re a nobilibus violari. Hinc rara aut nulla civitas est in qua inter populares et nobiles clam aut aperte seditio atque dissidium non sit. Ex hoc itaque popularium atque nobilium dissidio facile dominus civilis exoritur, et quidem interdum nobilium, interdum popularium insultu atque motu.'

⁶⁹ Ibid., 3.11: 'Is igitur qui nobilium aura ad principatum pervenit, eo difficilius se in principatu servabit, quam qui popularium favore princeps fit... Deinceps sine nobilibus regnum rex servare potest, sine populis minime.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 30–4.

⁷⁰ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.12: 'At si princeps qui populo imperitat vir quidem sit qui in adversis non facile cedat caeteraque paraverit quae ad resistendum iuverint, hic secure populo adhibere fidem poterit in illisque firmare, et quidem longe magis quam in nobilibus. Adhibitis enim omnibus quae ad resistendum necessaria sunt, melius cum multis quam cum paucis standum est.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 34.

⁷¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 3.13: 'Verum periclitantur principes hi cum ex civili ad absolutam tyrannidem perventire enituntur... Declaravit autem rem hanc Caesar, qui, cum magistratibus indulgentibus civiliter dominabatur, tuto regnavit; postquam autem ad absolutam potestatem pervenire enisus est, coniuratum est in eum.'

⁷² Ibid., 3.14: 'Potest autem civilis dominus civitatem suam defendere bifariam: aut urbem muniendo, aut arma propria propriosque milites creando.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 38–9.

⁷³ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.1: 'Nobis vero, etsi de ea plura in libello *De optimo principe* dixerimus, nunc haec videntur, quod liberalitas sit altera vulgaris, quae re vera prodigalitas est sapientum altera, de qua

clemency as means of maintaining a state. ‘Some say cruelty is more important than clemency for a new prince, others say clemency is more important than cruelty, while others still suggest that cruelty be used against a few in order to instil fear, and clemency towards many in order to inspire love’.⁷⁴ Nifo, unlike Machiavelli, seems to lean towards the third option as both cruelty and clemency, he argues, may be useful if tempered by prudence.⁷⁵ He then turns to the fraught question of whether a prince ought to be loved or feared and draws the Aristotelian distinction between a king and a tyrant wholly absent in Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, arguing that a king ought to be loved whereas a tyrant ought to be feared.⁷⁶ Nifo is here using Aristotle to remoralise Machiavelli’s text.⁷⁷ One should note, however, that Nifo immediately falls back into line with Machiavelli by suggesting that excessive benevolence is destructive in times of war and brings sedition to one’s army, so that it is sometimes better to be feared than to be loved.⁷⁸ This raises the question of whether it is, indeed, possible to be feared and loved

Aristoteles multa in *Ethicorum* libris. Huius duae sunt partes: altera in dando quibus oportet, quando oportet et honesti causa; altera in non capiendo ab his quibus non oportet. Hinc illud Livii verum est, cum inquit: “luxuria et avaritia omnia regna pessundant”, per luxuriam enim non tantum immodicum luxum, sed prodigalitatem intelligens, quae vulgaris liberalitas est... Liberalitas autem principi idonea est non ea ex parte qua aliis plura quam sibi erogat, quoniam (ut dictum est) bellorum nervum delere cogetur, sed ea ex parte qua a quibus non debet non accipit.’ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1119b–1122b; Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 54–6.

⁷⁴ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.3: ‘Nonnulli crudelitatem prodesse magis asserunt, qua immitis princeps existimetur a subditis... Ad haec novo principi periculosa est clementia, necessaria autem crudelitas... Aliis vero placet magis clementia, cum virtus sit quae in parcendo mediocritatem servat... Sunt qui dicunt crudelitate in paucos, clementia in multos utendum esse: in paucos quidem crudelitate pro malorum terrore (oderunt enim peccare mali formidine poenae); clementia vero in multos ad crudelitatis nomen evitandum; est enim crudelitatis nomen adeo infaustum et odiosum ut inimicos et amicos suspectos faciat.’

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4.3: ‘Princeps enim in aliquibus crudelitate utens non nihil boni lucratur, in aliquibus vero mali multum. Rursus regionis ac locorum considerata ratio est, quippe cum quibusdam regionibus utilis pro pace inter eos firmenda sit crudelitas, aliis contra perniciosissima; quare clementia atque crudelitas principi utilis esse potest, modo prudentia ac recta ratione temperetur.’ Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 57.

⁷⁶ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.4: ‘Si autem fieri non potest ut pariter princeps et ametur et timeatur, distinguendum esse arbitror regem a tyranno. Nam tyranno fortasse timeri tutius est, siquidem in tyrannide vinculum timoris firmitus est quam amoris. Regi autem amari longe melius et honorabilius esse censemus; nam erga regem subditorum benivolentia naturalis admodum est.’ Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 57–9.

⁷⁷ On Nifo’s remoralisation of Machiavelli, see S. Anglo, *Machiavelli: The First Century*, pp. 55–67; P. Cosentino, ‘Un plagio del “Principe”’, pp. 147–60.

⁷⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.5: ‘Quod autem timeri utilius interdum sit quam amari testes nobis Hannibal atque Scipio sunt. In Hannibalis enim exercitu, licet ex pluribus hominum generibus constaret, nullam factam esse seditionem legimus, in exercitu vero Scipionis plurimas contigisse scribunt. Illud quidem quia Hannibal timendus ac terribilis erat; hoc vero quia Scipio militibus benivolutus atque ab eisdem amatus.’ Cf. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 58–9.

at the same time. Nifo, unlike Machiavelli, thinks it is so long as there is justice.⁷⁹ But, if it is possible to be feared and loved at the same time, what is the origin of conspiracies? Nifo rearranges Machiavelli's thought in order to distinguish between conspiracies stemming from the prince himself, the people, and foreign enemies, arguing that the first are the result of the prince's ineptitude and weakness, which breeds contempt among his party, the second are the product of his injustice, which breeds hatred towards him, and the third are the outcome of factions; the worst sort of conspiracy is a combination of all three.⁸⁰ In other words, following Machiavelli, Nifo argues that conspiracies may be avoided if the prince is loved and venerated by his own people, has his own army, and keeps close allies and friends.⁸¹

Halfway through the fourth book, Nifo goes on a brief tangent about the French Parliament in order to argue that nothing seems to foster love for the ruler more than justice, which serves both the ruler, noblemen, and the people equally.⁸² Balance is key. Nifo follows Machiavelli in arguing that, if we examine why certain Roman Emperors who governed the people justly died a violent death, it is that they were unable to reconcile their soldiers' lust for crime with the desire for peace and justice of their citizens.⁸³ Like Machiavelli, who used the example of Antoninus to criticise both injustice against one person and mass murder, Nifo warns the prince against inflicting too much injustice upon a single individual since there are

⁷⁹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.6: 'Potest igitur aliquid pariter timeri ac amari, ut Deus et pater. Potest etiam aliquid timeri et non amari, ut fulmen. Potest etiam aliquid timeri et odio haberi, ut hostis, quando potentia ac fortitudine est formidabilis. Denique aliquid timeri potest, pariter nec odio haberi, ut princeps qui absque clementia atque commiseratione iusta agit, qui subditis iniurias non infert, bona eorum non deprædatur ac cuncta quae facit iure ac ratione facit.'

⁸⁰ Ibid., 4.7: 'Coniuratio igitur ex parte principis, ex parte subditorum popularium et ex parte aemulorum ortum habet. Ex parte principis quidem cum ipse imprudens, ineptus, timidus, importens, sine foederatis atque benevolis finitimis fuerit; ex parte subditorum vero cum ob iniurias, ob nova tributa, ob novas leges quibus erant insueti vivere atque ob scelera nefanda principem summo odio prosequuntur; ex parte aemulorum quando principatus factionibus esset dissectus, ob quas etiam subditi essent divisi. Maxime autem timenda coniuratio ea est quae ex his omnibus ortum habet, ut ex populari odio, ex principis flagitiis ac importentia et ex aemulorum invasione.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 62–5.

⁸¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.7: 'Delebitur enim coniuratio primum quidem si princeps a populo erit amatus ac veneratus, deinde vero si proprios milites habuerit necnon et federibus iunctos et amicos ac socios.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 65.

⁸² Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.8: 'Nihil enim ad amandum regem magis cogere videtur (ut inquit Socrates) quam ea iustitia quae regi et populis et nobilibus aequalitatem servat.'

⁸³ Ibid., 4.9: 'Imperatores ergo qui populos bene iusteque regebant quique eos a militibus opprimi insolenter non permittebant, odio a militibus habebantur; hinc aliquando in eos coniurabatur. Qui vero contra militibus ipsis haerebant, eorum scelera ac rapinas permittentes, a populis odio habebantur et inde populi in eos persaepe conspirabant. Hinc factum est ut quibusdam virtus, quibusdam vitium obfuerit.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 66.

those who are willing risk their lives in order to get revenge.⁸⁴ But there is no doubt that these issues are seen as somewhat trivial compared to the question of whether a prince should keep his faith or not. Nifo mentions by way of Machiavelli the myth of Achilles and Chiron the centaur, and the related metaphor of the man and beast within a prince, to argue that *regnandi causa*, that is reason of state, sometimes compels the prince to violate an oath.⁸⁵ But then ensues the question of how a tyrant can keep his word, since he relies on it to keep alliances that safeguard his state. The answer, according to Nifo, here again following Machiavelli, is simulation.⁸⁶ The tyrant must keep his word in every instance and only fail to do so *regnandi causa*, for reason of state.⁸⁷

Mentioning Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Nifo argues that glory and greatness, faithfulness and steadfastness, compassion and honesty, and the prince's affability are what spawn loyalty and admiration towards the prince and secure his state.⁸⁸ As in *The Prince*, Ferdinand II acts as a model.⁸⁹ And following Machiavelli, he deems neutrality to be dangerous.⁹⁰ Nifo echoes the Florentine in describing an excellent prince as one who trusts his own judgement, a mediocre

⁸⁴ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.10: 'Caveat ergo princeps alicui acriter officere iniuriasque praeter modum inferre; nam sunt qui ut ulciscantur non curant mori.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 69.

⁸⁵ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.11: 'Prudentem enim esse principem dicunt qui pro temporum ratione et homine et bestia uti non ignoraverit: bestia quidem cum leges et fidem atque iusiurandum omittit, arma vero ac vim sequitur; hominem autem, cum praedicta omnia observaverit. Quam rem profecto scriptores animadvertentes Achillem et nonnullos alios vetustissimos reges a Chirone centauro educatos esse scripserunt, significare volentes, ut ego quidem interpretor, reges pro temporum, locorum ac personarum ratione uti debere utraque natura, humana quidem cum vera dixerit fidemque ac iusiurandum servaverit, ferina vero cum regnandi causa iusiurandum violare compellitur.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 60–1. I follow both Sydney Anglo and Paul Larivaille in translating *regnandi causa* as reason of state.

⁸⁶ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.11: 'Tyrannus itaque regium munus (ut dicunt) servare videri poterit primo quidem simulatione, ut si se veracem fidem ac religionem servaturum palam omnibus pollicebitur, si eos etiam punierit qui fidem ac iusiurandum spreverint, si insuper prae se ferret se veritatis studiosum, iusti defensorem, iniuriarum acerrimum hostem. Cum enim haec simulaverit, tyrannus ut verax a vulgo habebitur, a paucissimis simulator. Soli enim sapientes cum simulare intelligent, caeteri omnes id ignorabunt.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 61.

⁸⁷ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.11: 'Deinde in omnibus fidem servare debet tyrannus, in paucis iusiurandum violare, ut solum in his quae regnandi causa fiunt, quae pauca admodum sunt, quare verax a pluribus habebitur.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 61–2.

⁸⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.12: 'Quoniam nihil est quod populos magis principum voluntati subiiciat quam autoritas ac admiratio, deinceps quae res admirabilem et magni aestimandum principem faciant ponamus. Sunt enim quatuor, ut Aristoteles in *Rhetoricorum* libris edocet: rerum gestarum gloria ac magnitudo, fidei certitudo ac stabilitas, populorum cura atque rerum honestarum professio, principis facilitas.'

⁸⁹ Ibid., 4.12: 'Nostris quidem temporibus admirabilem grandia facinora fecerunt Ferdinandum Catholicum (de quo saepius locutus sum), maternum avum tuum, cuius res gestas si recensere vellem, historias, non disputationem componere me oporteret.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 76.

⁹⁰ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.13: 'Neutra igitur inclinatio periculosa est ac plerunque fallax.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 77.

prince as one who follows good counsel, and a useless prince as one having no prudence.⁹¹ Counsellors ought to be wise, devoted, discrete, and virtuous. Nifo is quick to highlight, like Machiavelli, that good advice ensues from the prince's own prudence,⁹² though he makes a fast jab at contemporary courtiers by stating that most counsellors in his day are ignorant and self-interested.⁹³ Flattery, of course, is necessary to bring a prince authority but it is to be avoided when deliberating.⁹⁴ Splendour is advised but luxury, as Cicero says, is discouraged.⁹⁵ A prince should be judged chiefly by his strength and prudence rather than by splendour or luxury.⁹⁶ Thus Nifo brings the fourth book to a close and prepares for the polished image of the prince in the final book.

The entire fifth book hinges on the Aristotelian proposition that there is nothing that brings a prince greater happiness than living and ruling honestly. Nifo's picture here bears no relation to Machiavelli's.⁹⁷ He seems to have revised his position vis-à-vis men's appetite for rule, arguing that what is innate cannot be evil as long as it is not abused.⁹⁸ If a king rules

⁹¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.14: 'Princeps igitur qui, pro sese omnia noscens, consilio pollet nec in agendo aliorum consiliis eget, hic optimus atque excellentissimus est et natura princeps... Qui vero in agendo aliorum consiliis ac monitis utens recte agit, hic mediocris et non parva laude dignus: discernere enim inter hoc et illud (ut Aristoteles inquit) prudentis est. At qui nec ipse videt nec per se consilio pollet nec recta monenti credit nec consilia discernit, hic omnino inutilis est et natura servus.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 79–80. Nifo's reference is to Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095b10–14 and Hesiod, *Works and Days*, ed. G.W. Most (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), 293–6.

⁹² Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.15: 'Regii igitur consilarii sunt qui et sapientes et regis amici et studiosi sunt, a communi virtute clari. Consilium vero principis, quod laudari solet, est quod ex principis prudentia oritur.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 83.

⁹³ Ibid., 4.15: 'Ex hisce patet quam pravus sit hodie nostrorum principum error, qui non his aut philosophis aut iureconsultis consiliariis utuntur, qui prudentia et virtute et benevolentia clari sunt, sed plerunque his qui et pravi et rerum omnium imperiti et non regis sed suorum commodorum amici sunt.'

⁹⁴ Ibid., 4.16: 'Ex his igitur quae superius dicta sunt patet an adultores permittendi sint. In consiliis enim quae a secretis fiunt a principe nullo pacto adultores qui assententur permittendi sunt... Post autem eam deliberationem quam ex consilio princeps elegerit, nullum in suam praesentiam nisi adulatorem permittat; nam deliberatio firma et stabilis esse debet.'

⁹⁵ Ibid., 4.17: 'Verum dicamus splendorem principibus bene convenire, non autem luxuriam.'

⁹⁶ Ibid., 4.17: 'Per quae affabulatus est Aesopus principes non propter pulchritudinem atque luxum, sed ob fortitudinem ac prudentiam eligendos esse.'

⁹⁷ Ibid., 5 preface: 'Quia igitur nihil est quod principes magis felices reddat, quam si honeste regnaverint (nam caeteras felicitatis partes quasi natura duce assequuntur), ideo de honesto regnandi genere disserendum.'

⁹⁸ Ibid., 5 preface: 'Quia igitur in singulis rebus insita nobis est supereminetiae appetitio atque imperandi cupiditas, haec infelix censenda non est, quippe cum quae natura nobis insunt omni culpa ac reprehensione vacent; quare, quemadmodum cibi, potus ac venereorum usus, si ad voluptatem referatur, crimine non caret, ita si quis principatu praeter rationem abutatur vituperabitur.' Cf. Ibid., 1.2.

tyrannically he becomes a tyrant and if a tyrant rules regally he becomes a king.⁹⁹ Nifo argues that there are three forms of monarchy, namely hereditary, elective, and tyrannical.¹⁰⁰ An elective king can either be legitimate or illegitimate depending on whether or not he is chosen fairly and governs well.¹⁰¹ The honest way to rule by hereditary kingship, that is to ensure the common good, entails education and good government as well.¹⁰² A fair election is free, that is uncoerced and uncorrupted, decided by its citizens who end up appointing the candidate who is or seems wisest, most temperate, most just, and strongest.¹⁰³ A good education is the one described by Socrates in Plato's *Alcibiades*.¹⁰⁴ The best way of governing a state is with wisdom, temperance, justice, and fortitude, that is by tending to the divine, avoiding cupidity, acting in an exemplary way, living sincerely, causing no injury, and acting fairly.¹⁰⁵ Tyrants are tortured by their conscience, live in fear, are always murderous, chased from their state, killed with impunity, and sent to Hell.¹⁰⁶ The aim and end of an honest king, as Aristotle says, is virtue, eternal glory, remembrance. This ensures him an afterlife in Heaven.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁹ Ibid., 5 preface: 'Fit enim qui rex est, si tyrannice suum regnum administrarit, tyrannus, veluti contra tyrannus fit rex si tyrannicam gubernationem in regiam permutaverit.'

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 5.1: 'Est igitur regnandi genus triplex: unum quidem per successionem, alterum per electionem, tertium per tyrannidem.'

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 5.1: 'Verum cum electio duplex sit, altera legitima, altera illegitima, tunc honestum regnandi genus per electionem est quum et praecedat legitima electio et sequitur optima subditorum gubernatio et eorum quae regni sunt optima administratio.'

¹⁰² Ibid., 5.1: 'Honestum vero regnandi genus per successionem est quum et successionem praecessit optima educatio et sequitur optima subditorum gubernatio atque eorum quae regni sunt optima dispositio.'

¹⁰³ Ibid., 5.3: 'Legitima vero regis electio (ut Aristoteles *Politicorum* tertio describit) est quae libera est; non enim quae vi aut corruptione aut largitione empta est, legitima nuncupari debet. Insuper et quae ab his oritur in quibus autoritas est eligendi... Demum legitima dicitur cum ex omnibus aliis qui eligendi sint is eligitur qui aut est aut videtur caeteris sapientior, temperatior, iustior ac fortior.'

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 5.4: 'Optima denique regis educatio a Socrate apud Platonem in *Alcibiade* primo sub exemplo educationis regum Persarum perpulchre describitur.' See Plato, *Alcibiades*, 121B–122B.

¹⁰⁵ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 5.2: 'Optima igitur gubernatio ac eorum quae regni sunt optima administratio est quae sit per sapientiam, temperantiam, iustitiam atque fortitudinem'.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 5.5: 'Tyrannorum itaque exitus hic est: primo ut conscientia scelerum semper crucientur... Deinde ut semper in metu sint... Postmodum ut carnifices semper sint... Deinceps ut e regnis exulent... Ad haec ut et impune occidantur... Postremo ut in infernas Acherontis poenas truantur'.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 5.ultimum: 'Honesti vero regis finis primo est virtus. Haec (ut Aristoteles inquit) est omnium honestarum actionum finis... Deinde est perennis gloria atque honestus honor... Postea est recte factorum conscientia ac memoria... Demum praemium ultimum quod honesto regi paratur a Deo est. Deus enim... hos reges qui pietatem, iustitiam caeterasque virtutes coluerunt, et civitates et populos, gentes, nationes optime gubernarunt, sempiterni aevi participes reddit, ut aeterna cum numinibus vita fruatur.'

III. ARISTOTLE REMORALISED

Nifo mentions Aristotle throughout the *De regnandi peritia*. He employs his works either to expand on, to corroborate, or to remoralise Machiavelli. He uses the *Politics* in the very first chapter of his plagiarism to revise Machiavelli's classification of the constitutions and reclaim the distinction between king and tyrant that enables him to temper some of Machiavelli's controversial axioms.¹⁰⁸ He employs the *Politics* in the second book to introduce the three elements on which the stability of the state rests, namely the strength of will of the ruler, justice, and whatever supports these.¹⁰⁹ He uses it also to argue that war is never welcome and to reinforce the idea that a citadel is generally useless and dangerous to a republic.¹¹⁰ He vaguely cites it in the fourth book with an *ut dicunt* (so they say) to describe how tyrants simulate for reason of state.¹¹¹ He quotes it in the fifth book when he says that 'a prince must be powerful and strong, so that he may not only resist bad men but chase them away and destroy them'.¹¹² He cites it again in the fifth book to describe legitimate elections.¹¹³ And he employs it in the final chapter of the fifth book to argue that the *telos* of an honest king is virtue and that honour and glory define him.¹¹⁴ Nifo alludes to and cites the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the first chapter of the fourth book when discussing liberality, cross-referencing his own *Libellus*,¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.1. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1278b6–1280a5.

¹⁰⁹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.1: 'Regna ergo conservantur atque possidentur tribus (ut Aristoteles auctor est) fundamentis: fortitudine, iustitia et iis quae his subserviunt.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1309a33–b5.

¹¹⁰ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.11: 'Accedit ad haec quod actiones bellicae (ut Aristoteles inquit) non propter se ipsas expetibiles sint.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1333b29–1334a10. Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.17: 'Aristoteles vero inutilem periculosamque arcem esse in optima republica praebereque eam tyrannidis oportunitatem asserit.' Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1330b17–1331a18: 'In the planning of strongholds there is no one policy which is equally good for all constitutions. A citadel suits oligarchies and monarchies; a level plain suits democracy; neither suits an aristocracy, for which a number of strong places is preferable.'

¹¹¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.11. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314a29–1315a7.

¹¹² Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 5.2: 'Per fortitudinem denique impavide ac intrepide bona agat, mala vitet, per eandem subditos, si oportet (ut inquit Aristoteles), secundum leges vivere compellat, unde tertio *Politicorum* libro inquit principem oportere esse potentem ac fortem, ut non solum pravis hominibus resistere, sed eos et fugare et penitus delere possit.'

¹¹³ Ibid., 5.3: 'Legitima vero regis electio (ut Aristoteles *Politicorum* tertio describit) est quae libera est; non enim quae vi aut corruptione aut largitione empta est, legitima nuncupari debet.'

¹¹⁴ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 5.5: 'Honesti vero regis finis primo est virtus. Haec (ut Aristoteles inquit) est omnium honestarum actionum finis... Hinc Aristoteles principem cui non satis est premii honor et gloria tyrannum fieri asserit.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1282a23–40.

¹¹⁵ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.1: 'Nam si eius (ut Aristoteles inquit) qui liberalis est vehementer in dando excedere sit, ita ut sibi ipsi pauciora relinquantur, fit ut princeps qui liberalis est plura aliis quam sibi

and to describe prudence and wisdom in a prince.¹¹⁶ He employs it in the final chapter of the fourth book to discuss splendour,¹¹⁷ and he alludes to it again in the fifth book when he discusses virtue, nature, and education.¹¹⁸

Of all the works that make up the Aristotelian corpus, though, it is Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that Nifo explicitly mentions most frequently. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is only explicitly mentioned once, in the first chapter of the fourth book. The *Politics* is only explicitly mentioned twice, in the second and third chapters of the fifth book. The *Rhetoric* is explicitly mentioned seven times, in the ninth and eighteenth chapters of the second book, the first, twelfth, and fifteenth chapters of the fourth book, and in the preface and fourth chapter of the fifth book. To be sure, Nifo often mentions Aristotle without giving specific references to his texts; these sometimes refer to the *Nicomachean Ethics* but usually the *Politics* – his name appears in the first chapter of the first book, first and eleventh chapters of the second, twice in the first and fourteenth chapters of the fourth book, once in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of the same book, once in the fourth chapter of the fifth book, and twice in the conclusion. Nevertheless, Nifo's reliance on the *Rhetoric* is curious.

Of course, the *Rhetoric* had been used by medieval scholastic philosophers to reflect upon the nature of political counsel and to expand on elements of the *Ethics* and *Politics*. Giles of Rome's (1244–1316) *De regimine principum* (*On the Rule of Princes*) of around 1277 is illuminating. Giles identified three ways of broaching the subject of political counsel, the first

dare cogatur, quare extraordinariis tributis subditos gravare compelletur' and 'Nobis vero, etsi de ea plura in libello *De optimo principe* dixerimus, nunc haec videntur, quod liberalitas sit altera vulgaris, quae re vera prodigalitas est, sapientum altera, de qua Aristoteles multa in *Ethicorum* libris.' See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1119b20–1122b20. Nifo, *Libellus in Opuscula politica*, pp. 118–20.

¹¹⁶ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.14: 'Qui vero in agendo aliorum consiliis ac monitis utens recte agit, hic mediocris et non parva laude dignus: discernere enim inter hoc et illud (ut Aristoteles inquit) prudentis est.' See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140a24–b30 and 1141b20–30.

¹¹⁷ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.17: 'Verum dicamus splendorem principibus bene convenire, non autem luxuriam. Est enim splendor (ut Aristoteles inquit) cibi, vestitus, famulorum, equorum domesticarumque rerum omnium quae ad vitae usum esse solent rationabilis mediocritas.' See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1122a18–1123a35.

¹¹⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 5.4: 'Non enim (ut Aristoteles inquit) ad virtutem capessendam satis est genus aut generis semen, sed necessarium est ut is qui ex optimo semine nascitur optime educatus sit diuque in virtutum actionibus assuescat. At qui nec ipse videt nec per se consilio pollet nec recta monenti credit nec consilia discernit hic omnino inutilis est et natura servus, unde Aristoteles, autore Hesiodo: "Optimus ille quidem qui, per sese omnia noscens, praeceptor suus ipse sibi meliora peregit; ille bonus rursum monitus qui recta sequetur; qui non ipse videt nec credit recta monenti, hic nulla in parte utilis est".' See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a15–b25.

‘from the point of view of the material with which an art of this kind is concerned, the second from the point of view of the end aimed at in this art, and the third from the point of view of the audience to be instructed by it.’¹¹⁹ Since the audience of the book was the entire populace, and the populace did not have the same keenness of intellect as kings, the book focused on the typical and the general. In other words, Giles shunned exemplary narrative and scriptural authority for systematic and logical exposition. Moreover, he looked to the *Rhetoric* for ways to persuade kings and populace, turn political theory into political action, and add substance to his arguments.¹²⁰

Nifo, however, employs the *Rhetoric* in a radically different way to his medieval predecessors. There is no discussion of the nature of political counsel in his mirror-for-princes. There is no explanation of the relationship between the *Rhetoric* and Aristotle’s practical philosophy. There is no claim that the subject investigated applies to the populace. The phrase *procedemus autem in omnibus more nostro peripatetico* (that is ‘we shall proceed in everything according to our peripatetic custom’) found at the beginning of the second book of *De regnandi peritia* is merely in reference to the practice of discussing things generally and then *per capita* (that is ‘step-by-step’).¹²¹ Contrary to Giles, Nifo embraces exemplary narrative.

Aristotle had identified three genres of rhetoric, namely deliberative, forensic, and demonstrative (or epideictic). Each genre has two kinds, namely exhortation and deterrence, prosecution and defence, and praise and denigration. Each kind reflects the different objectives of deliberative, forensic, and demonstrative rhetoric, namely advantage or harm, justice or injustice, and nobility or baseness.¹²² Aristotle had identified five key common subjects of deliberation, namely revenue, war and peace, the defence of the realm, imports

¹¹⁹ Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum* (Venice, 1502), 1.1. All English translations are from A.S. McGrade *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1988–2002), ii (*Ethics and Political Philosophy*), p. 204.

¹²⁰ On Giles’s debt to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, see M.S. Kempshall, ‘The Rhetoric of Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum*’ in F. Lachaud (ed.), *Prince au miroir de la littérature politique de l’Antiquité aux Lumières* (Rouen, 2007), pp. 161–90; M.S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought*, pp. 130–56.

¹²¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2 preface: ‘Cum de modis quibus regna acquirantur dictum sit breviter, nunc de modis quibus regna diu a regibus possidentur agendum nobis est, et primo quidem generatim, postea per capita’; *Ibid.*, 2.1: ‘Procedemus autem in omnibus more nostro peripatetico.’

¹²² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1358a–b.

and exports, and legislation, and outlines the prerequisite knowledge that the orator must have in order to deliberate effectively over these matters. His remarks on war and peace, the defence of the realm, and legislation are revealing.¹²³

Nifo's debt to Aristotle's discussion of deliberative rhetoric is evident. He repeats Aristotle's instructions on what the orator ought to know in order to discuss war and peace and the defence of the realm word for word in the ninth and eighteenth chapters of the second book of his *De regnandi peritia*.¹²⁴ Aristotle had underlined the close relationship between deliberative rhetoric and his discussion of the dissolution of constitutions in the *Politics*, which informs Nifo's mirror-for-princes by way of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. 'The most important and decisive of all factors relating to the ability to persuade and counsel well,' Aristotle wrote, 'is the grasp of all the constitutions and the distinction of the customs, regulations and interests of each. For all are persuaded by what is to their advantage and what is to their disadvantage is what preserves the constitution.'¹²⁵ Constitutions are chosen based on their end, so he outlines the purpose of each constitution. 'The purpose, then, of democracy is freedom, that of oligarchy is wealth, that of aristocracy has to do with education and customs, and that of tyranny is security.'¹²⁶

Nifo's debt, however, is also obscured by the fact that his references to the *Rhetoric* are mostly incorrect. Aside from the two explicit references to Aristotle's discussion of the subjects of deliberative rhetoric in the ninth and eighteenth chapters of the second book of *De regnandi peritia* and his claims about education and nobility in the fourth chapter of the fifth book, Nifo misrepresents what Aristotle says in the *Rhetoric*.¹²⁷ Nowhere in the *Rhetoric* did Aristotle state, as Nifo claims in the first chapter of the fourth book, that if the prince is overly generous he destroys the central ingredient of war, namely money.¹²⁸ That thought belongs to

¹²³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1359b–1360a.

¹²⁴ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.9 and 2.18.

¹²⁵ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1365b.

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1366a.

¹²⁷ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 5.4: 'Nam licet (ut Aristoteles inquit in *Rhetoricorum* libris) verisimile sit probum ex probis esse, non tamen ita plerunque evenire asserit, nisi bene educatus sit.' See Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1367b.

¹²⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.1: 'Ad haec, si plura aliis quam sibi liberalis princeps dare debet, belli nervum elidet qui, ut Demosthenes in *Philippum* et post eum Aristoteles in *Rhetoricorum* libris scribit,

Machiavelli.¹²⁹ Nowhere in the *Rhetoric* did Aristotle state, as Nifo claims in the twelfth chapter of the fourth book, that glory, greatness, loyalty, and the public good are what make a prince esteemed.¹³⁰ Nowhere in the *Rhetoric* did Aristotle state, as Nifo claims in the fifteenth chapter of the fourth book, that a wiseman who does not love his prince will not be able to advise him well.¹³¹ Nowhere in the *Rhetoric* did Aristotle state, as Nifo claims in the preface of the fifth book, that princes are largely happy as long as they know what makes them happy and do not turn that into an evil.¹³²

Nifo's misuse of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is puzzling. However, a brief look back at both the reception of Aristotle's discussion of tyranny in the aftermath of Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Nifo's use of classical authors throughout the *De regnandi peritia* seems to offer us a unique key to solve the enigma. We saw at the beginning of the previous chapter how Renaissance readers of Machiavelli often drew ties between Aristotle's discussion of tyranny in the *Politics* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The historian and literary figure Bernardo Segni (1504–58) was the first to draw an explicit parallel between the two in his *Trattato dei governi di Aristotile* (*Treatise on the Governments of Aristotle*) of 1549, an Italian translation of the *Politics*.¹³³ This was soon followed by the Professor of the Collège Royale Louis Le Roy's (1510–77) criticism of Aristotle's discussion of tyranny in *Les Politiques d'Aristote* (*The Politics of Aristotle*) of 1568.¹³⁴ The

nummus est; quare, si bellum sustinere voluerit, gravare subditos ipsosque novis tributis opprimere cogetur, unde fit ut regnum in magno periculo constituat.'"

¹²⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 54–6.

¹³⁰ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.12.

¹³¹ Ibid., 4.15: 'Deinde principem summo amore prosequi debent; nam, ut Aristoteles inquit in *Rhetoricorum libris*, sapiens, nisi amaverit, rectum consilium dare non poterit.'

¹³² Ibid., 5.preface: 'Quamobrem felices nasci principes pro maiore parte putat in *Rhetoricorum libris* Aristotelis, si modo suam felicitatem noverint nec eam in malum perverterint.'

¹³³ Bernardo Segni, *Trattato dei governi di Aristotile* (Florence, 1549), p. 290: 'Doppo che'l Filosofo ha trattato delle corruttioni, et salvationi di tutti gli Stati, tratta egli in questo Cap[itolo] delle corruttioni delle Monarchie; mostrando imprima il nascimento della Tirannide, et del Regno, et la diversita de' lor' fini, et delle cagioni, che rovinano amendue questi Principati: affermando essere le medesime, che negli altri Stati. Et la ragione è, perché il Regno, et la Tirannide son' generati dagli altri Stati. Doppo questo tratta delle congiure in quanti modi elle si fanno, et per quante cagioni contra i Principi; et dice molte cose degne da esser notate, et avvertite da loro: delle quali buona parte n'ha tolto di qui il Machiavello nel suo lib[ro] del Principe. Essendovi infra l'altre notata anchor' quella di coloro, che congiurano contra li Principi, per acquistar' gloria. Da' quali afferma il Filosofo con difficoltà potersi guardare i Principi, perchè tali congiuranti non si curano di vivere.' On Segni's life, see M. Lupo Gentile, *Studi sulla storiografia fiorentina alla corte di Cosimo I de' Medici* (Pisa, 1905), pp. 1–94. On Segni and Machiavelli, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 47–50.

¹³⁴ On Le Roy, see W. Gundersheimer, *The Life and Works of Louis Le Roy* (Geneva, 1966); A. Becker, *Un humaniste au XVI^e siècle: Loys Le Roy* (Paris, 1986); E. Sciacca, *Umanesimo e scienza politica nella Francia del xvi*

Italian humanist and theologian Felice Figliucci (1525–90) raised the same issue in his dialogue *De la politica, ovvero scienza civile* (*On Politics, That Is Civil Science*) of 1583.¹³⁵ The Oxford Aristotelian John Case's (1525–1600) words in his *Sphaera civitatis* (*On the Sphere of the City*) of 1588, as noted earlier, are emblematic. Reflecting on Aristotle's discussion of the means of preserving tyranny he wondered whether or not to expand on the subject.¹³⁶

By relying so heavily on the *Rhetoric*, Nifo effectively avoided the risk of portraying Aristotle as Machiavellian. Of course, there are overlapping themes and ideas in Aristotle's discussion of deliberative rhetoric and Machiavelli's *The Prince*. These are the product of the relationship between rhetoric and politics and, more specifically, Aristotle's analysis of the dissolution of constitutions and deliberative rhetoric. Yet tyrants and tyranny are hardly ever mentioned in the *Rhetoric*. There is no description of the wicked means devised by Periander of Corinth or Hiero of Syracuse. The only questionable passage is in Book 1 of the *Rhetoric* where

secolo: Loys Le Roy (Florence, 2007). On Le Roy and Machiavelli, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, pp. 50–65 and pp. 117–20. Louis Le Roy, *Les Politiques d'Aristote: esquelles est monstrée la science de gouverner le genre humain en toutes espee d'estats publics* (Paris, 1568), p. 788: 'Machiavel Florentin escrivant du Prince, a tiré de ce passage la plus part de ses instructions, en y adioustant exemples romains et italiens.' Ibid., p. 789: 'Aristote semble avoir esté trop curieux en la deduction des moyens tyranniques, pourtant que les mauvais princes sont assez enclins d'eulz mesmes à inventer ce qui sert à leur grandeur et seureté, sans qu'il soit besoing les instruire par livres. Machiavel formant son Prince, a tiré d'icy, comme i'ay dit, les principaux fondemens de telle institution, qui doit estre leuë avec grande discretion, pour estre escrite par un autheur sans conscience, et sans religion, regardant seulement à la puissance et gloire mondaine, qui deçoit beaucoup de gens.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1313a34–1315b10.

¹³⁵ Felice Figliucci, *De la politica, ovvero scienza civile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile libri otto da M. Felice Figliucci scritti in modo di Dialogo* (Venice, 1583), fols. 185r–v: 'Hora resta che parliamo de i modi ne' quali queste monarchie si conservano per dare piena et assoluta cognizione di tutta questa materia... *M.F.* A me pare che di questo non si dovesse parlare, imperoche essendo le tirannidi cose triste et ingiuste, piu tosto si deveria imparare il modo di distruggerle che di conservarle, et non so come questo sia uffizio d'huomo da bene a insegnare che una cosa cosi scelerata, come è la tirannide si debbia salvare et mantenere. *M.L.* Io per questo non approvo nè laudo la tirannide, anzi la biasimo, et vitupero sopra modo, nè volgio io che vediamo in che modo le tirannidi si salvino, et conservino, accioche questi modi imparando li tiranni li usino poi per conservazione loro, anzi accioche vedendo essi quanto sceleratamente, et inhumanamente debbiano viver per conservarsi; conoscano la loro miseria, et infelicità; et per questo la tirannide fuggano et habbiano in abominazione, et odio, et ritornino a miglior vita; si che non mi riprendere si come ancora alcuni hanno ripreso Aristotile, et prima di lui fu ripreso il divino Platone, che pure scrisse questi modi di conservare le tirannidi, solo per la cagione che io vi ho detto.' It is unclear who exactly Figliucci is referring to when he says that *alcuni hanno ripreso Aristotile* (some have criticised Aristotle). The only author I can think of is Le Roy. But criticisms of Aristotle's discussion of the means of preserving tyranny may have been commonplace in the Renaissance.

¹³⁶ John Case, *Sphaera civitatis*, p. 273.

Aristotle explains induction by suggesting that all tyrants use bodyguards to ensure their safety.¹³⁷

A close look at the way Nifo handles Machiavelli's more controversial axioms, however, suggests a desire not just to circumvent Aristotle's discussion of tyranny in Book 5 of the *Politics*, but to rescue Aristotle from his affinity with Machiavelli, often at the expense of Cicero. It is Cicero who maintains in the second chapter of the first book of the *De regnandi peritia* that mankind has an innate appetite for rule.¹³⁸ It is Cicero who recounts in the sixteenth chapter of the second book how Aratus of Sicyon destroyed the tyrant Nicocles.¹³⁹ It is Cicero who says in the twelfth chapter of the fourth book that laws can be broken for reason of state.¹⁴⁰ Controversial issues, such as a negative view of human nature, tyrannicide, and reason of state are credited to Cicero rather than Aristotle. When Nifo discusses simulation in an obviously Aristotelian way he refers to Aristotle not by name but with a vague *ut dicunt* (some say). To be sure, Cicero is also credited with a definition of *luxuria* (luxury) and with reporting Brutus' maxim that nothing is better than to be 'indifferent to the vicissitudes of life, content with freedom and the memory of deeds well done'.¹⁴¹ Yet, throughout the *De regnandi peritia*, it is Aristotle's *Politics* that is chiefly associated with ideas of justice, peace, power, fairness, honesty, virtue, honour, and glory. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is credited with ideas of liberality, prudence, wisdom, splendour, virtue, and education. And the *Rhetoric* is used by Nifo to emphasise the importance of thriftiness, loyalty, concern for the common good, affability, devotion, and happiness.

Aristotle was not left unscathed by his inclusion in Nifo's plagiarism of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. There is a visible attempt by Nifo to adapt and update Aristotle to reflect the

¹³⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1357b19–20.

¹³⁸ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 1.2 and 5 preface. See Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.4.

¹³⁹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 2.16: 'Hunc modum servavit Aratus Sicyonius, qui (ut Cicero narrat) et suspectos et inimicos et amicos omnes in unum reduxit, ut tyrannum necaret.' See Cicero, *De officiis*, 2.23.

¹⁴⁰ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*, 4.12: 'Caesar ipse (ut M. Cicero autor est), si ius violandum est, regnandi causa violandum esse dicebat; et quia ea quae regnandi causa fiunt pauca admodum sunt, ideo tyrannus in paucis iurisiurandi violator existimabitur.' See Cicero, *De officiis*, 3.20.

¹⁴¹ Nifo, *De regnandi peritia*: 5 conclusion: 'Huc spectat illa Bruti sententia, qui Ciceronem scribens: "Quid enim igitur est melius quam conscientia recte factorum et libertate contentum negligere humana?"' See Cicero, *Letters to Brutus*, ed. D.R. Shackleton (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), 25.9.

modern character of Machiavelli's booklet. The use of *demarchia* instead of *politeia* to describe the regime of a democratic city-state without a standing army is revealing. The desire to elaborate on Aristotle's discussion of war and peace and national defence by including an outline of the different types of armies, a central element of *The Prince*, shows also a willingness occasionally to Machiavellise Aristotle. Crucially, the introduction of Aristotelian tenets into a Machiavellian analysis replete with contemporary examples yields a thoroughly modernised Aristotle. Aristotle's name appears in one form or another alongside those of Ferdinand I, Ferdinand II, Louis XII, and Francesco Sforza.

There are clear parallels between Aristotle's discussion of deliberative rhetoric and Machiavelli's advice-book that go beyond the content of both books and the relationship between Machiavelli's proclivity for controversy and the rhetorical practice of arguing *in utramque partem*, that is 'the capacity effectively to urge contradictory positions... not so that we may adopt either of the two (it is quite wrong to persuade men to evil), but that we should be aware how the case stands and be able, if our adversary deploys his arguments unjustly, to refute them.'¹⁴² At the end of his discussion of demonstrative rhetoric, Aristotle underscores the importance of examples in deliberation.

In general, in common forms of speech argument [that is praise] is most expedient in epideictic speaking (for the audience take the actions as agreed, so that it only remains to add greatness and nobility to them), examples in deliberative oratory (for we give judgement by predicting future events from past ones), and enthymemes in forensic oratory.¹⁴³

The resonance with Machiavelli's reliance on his long experience of modern affairs and continuous study of ancient histories is striking.¹⁴⁴

Yet, Nifo's use of the *Rhetoric* in his *De regnandi peritia* appears to be motivated less by a perceived analogy between Machiavelli's method and Aristotle's discussion of deliberative rhetoric than by a desire to avoid drawing parallels between some of the content of Book 5 of

¹⁴² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1355a.

¹⁴³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1368a.

¹⁴⁴ On the relationship between Machiavelli's method and Nifo's theory of rhetoric and dialectic, see C. Zwierlein, 'Politik als Experimentalwissenschaft, 1521–26'.

the *Politics* and *The Prince*. The plethora of passages in Nifo's plagiarism misattributed to Aristotle is the clue. Nifo offers a radically sanitised version of Aristotle's political thought, devoid of any reference to his more contentious ideas about how to preserve tyrannies in Book 5 of the *Politics* – often seen as the source of Machiavelli's axioms.

IV. CONCLUSION

In short, Nifo's *De regnandi peritia* is a plagiarism of Machiavelli but also an attempt to rescue Aristotle from him. While Renaissance and early-modern readers of Machiavelli were quick to emphasise a parallel between Aristotle's discussion of tyranny in Book 5 of the *Politics* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*, some saw the relationship between the two as problematic. The idea of Machiavelli as Aristotelian gave rise to the idea of Aristotle as Machiavellian. Hence Nifo's choice to remodel Machiavelli largely through the prism of the *Rhetoric* rather than the *Politics* in order to circumvent the issue. To be sure, different perceived motives behind Machiavelli's portrait of the prince and Aristotle's discussion of tyranny in Book 5 of the *Politics* helped to draw a distinction between the two. But Machiavellianism undoubtedly offered a new perspective on Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions in the Renaissance that quickly developed into an important feature of contemporary political discourse, even when Aristotle's anti-expansionist ideology was rejected for a more belligerent foreign policy as defended by the Romans and articulated by Machiavelli in the *Discourses*.

Part III

Neo-Roman Ideology and Aristotelian Political Theory:

Giovanni Pontano and Antonio Brucioli

I. THE IDEOLOGY OF THE RUCELLAI GARDENS

Oh blessed is he who under the old oak, uninvolved in livid competition for honours, either attends to poets' sacred words or cherishes scholarly contemplation, free from worries. He is thus neither concerned with the actions of princes nor is he afraid of the power of kings, but hides away in his flowery garden and saves himself for posterity.¹

Pietro Crinito (1474–1505), *Ad Fastum de sylva Oricellaria* (1504)

Crinito's Horatian poem *De sylva Oricellaria* (*On the Oricellari Gardens*) is wonderfully evocative, but it is also a lie. The *sylva Oricellaria*, better known as the Orti Oricellari, that is the gardens of Palazzo Rucellai in Florence, was far from the nest of quiet life that he would have had his readers believe. By the time he wrote the poem, the Rucellai Gardens had long been a well-known cradle of pro-Medicean activism.² As Crinito himself paradoxically relates in his *De honesta disciplina* (*On Proper Learning*) of 1504, to which the misleading verses are appended, the

¹ Pietro Crinito, 'Ad Fastum de sylva Oricellaria' in the *Poemata* appended to *De honesta disciplina* (Florence, 1504): 'Et ò beatum, qui sub antiqua ilice Liventis expers ambitus Vel sacra vatum curat, aut doctum otium Curis solutior fovet. Sic ille nil miratur actus principum Nec scepra regum suspicit Sed in virenti detinetur gramine, Et se reservat posteris.' Cf. Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, ed. N. Rudd (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), *Epode* 2, where one finds the expression 'sub antiqua ilice'.

² The Medici left Florence in 1494 and returned then in 1512. On the Medici's rule before their exile, see N. Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434 to 1494)* (Oxford, 1997). On the Florentine republic of 1494–1512, see G. Guidobaldo, *Lotte, pensiero e istituzioni politiche nella Repubblica fiorentina dal 1494 al 1512* (Florence, 1992). On the collapse of the Florentine republic, see J.N. Stephens, *The Fall of the Florentine Republic, 1512–1530* (Oxford, 1983).

gardens were a famous meeting-place for foreign and Florentine literati who would engage in discussions about ancient politics, the ideal state, and the foundations of Venice's strength.³

The reason for fiction is couched in context: neo-Platonism held currency there. The philosopher Francesco Cattani da Diacceto (1466–1522), heir to Marsilio Ficino's (1433–99) mythical Platonic Academy, was a long-standing member of the Orti Oricellari.⁴ One of his students who belonged to the same circle, Giovanni Corsi (1472–1547), wrote Ficino's biography.⁵ Rucellai himself was described as a follower of the great neo-Platonist.⁶ And Plato's *Republic*, translated in 1402 by the humanist Uberto Decembrio (1350–1427) and the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras (1355–1415) and then by Uberto's son Pier Candido Decembrio (1399–1477) in 1437–9 and Ficino in 1484, made it clear that the best life was a contemplative one.⁷ Crinito's exaltation of scholarly life reflected this.

In truth, most of the members of the Rucellai Gardens were politically active, most of them had strong feelings against Piero Soderini's (1450–1522) republic of 1502–1512, and most of them believed that the contemporary elite should rule Florence. In spite of waning admiration for Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–92) they set in motion the same process of idealisation that Lorenzo's grandfather, Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), had enjoyed by way

³ Crinito, *De honesta disciplina*, 2.14: 'In hortis Oricellariis cum nuper aliquot egregie docti Homines convenerunt: ubi de honestis litteris optimisque disciplinis saepe et copiose agitur; forte incidit mentio de veterum institutis: de regenda civitate; ac de Venetum clarissimo atque summo imperio...'. See F. Gilbert, 'Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 12 (1949), pp. 101–31. On the myth of Venice in the Orti Oricellari see F. Gilbert, 'The Venetian Constitution in Florentine Political Thought' in N. Rubinstein (ed.), *Florentine Studies: Politics and Society in Renaissance Florence* (London, 1968), pp. 463–500.

⁴ On Diacceto, see P.O. Kristeller, 'Francesco Diacceto and Florentine Platonism in the Sixteenth Century', *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* (6 vols., Vatican City, 1946), iv, pp. 260–304, reprinted in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (4 vols., Rome, 1984–96), i, pp. 287–336; E. del Soldato, 'The Elitist Vernacular of Francesco Cattani da Diacceto and Its Afterlife', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 16 (2013), pp. 343–62 (see fn. 2 for further bibliographical details). Kristeller was one of the first to allude to an early phase of the meetings of the Rucellai Gardens. On my reasons for referring to the Platonic Academy as mythical see J. Hankins, 'Cosimo de' Medici and the "Platonic Academy"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 53 (1990), pp. 144–62 and 'The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 44 (1991), pp. 429–75 both reprinted in *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., Rome, 2003–4), ii, pp. 187–218 and pp. 219–72 respectively.

⁵ Giovanni Corsi, *Vita Marsili Ficini* (1506) in R. Marcel, *Marsile Ficin (1433–1499)* (Paris, 1958), pp. 680–9. On Corsi, see P.O. Kristeller, 'Un uomo di Stato e umanista fiorentino: Giovanni Corsi', *Bibliofilia*, 38 (1936), pp. 242–57 and 'Per la biografia di Marsilio Ficino', *Civiltà Moderna*, 10 (1938), pp. 277–98, both reprinted in *Studies*, i, pp. 175–90 and pp. 191–212 respectively.

⁶ Corsi, *Vita Marsili Ficini*, p. 687: 'Sed conveniebant homines inter alios quotidiano prope convictu Bernardus Oricellarius, Joannes Canaccius et Bindacius Recasolanus, viri quidem priscae integritatis atque eruditionis, quales ut Poeta dixit, nec animae candidiores terra tulit.'

⁷ Plato, *Republic*, ed. R. Waterfield (Oxford, 1993), 514A–521A.

of thinkers such as Bartolomeo Scala (1430–97) in his *Collectiones Cosimianae* (*Cosimian Collections*) of 1464 and *Dialogus de legibus et iudiciis* (*Dialogue on the Laws and Courts*) of 1483.⁸ This new idol, also known as Lorenzo the Magnificent, bore a striking resemblance to that of his grandfather.⁹

Of course, the ideology of the Rucellai Gardens maintained a close affinity with the Platonic ideals of philosopher-kings, class division, and the primacy of good rule over good laws.¹⁰ The ideas generated in the Rucellai Gardens, however, also suggest a far greater eclecticism than is often implied. Crinito's *De honesta disciplina*, which was written at the time of the meetings, is a commonplace book that rests on a plethora of ancient and contemporary sources.¹¹ Diacceto lectured at the University of Pisa in Florence not only on the Platonic corpus but on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *On the Soul* and *Physics* and had begun a syncretistic work of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy.¹² The bulk of Corsi's literary production consists of translations of Plutarch as well as a Latin rendering of the Pythagorean Timaeus of Locri's *De mundi anima*.¹³ Crucially, Bernardo Rucellai himself showed a keener interest in ancient Roman and recent Florentine history than in any 'ism' of his time.¹⁴

⁸ No edition of the *Collectiones Cosimianae* exists, but the preface and the *Dialogus* have been published with parallel translation in Bartolomeo Scala, *Essays and Dialogues*, ed. R.N. Watkins (Cambridge, Mass., 2008). On Scala, see A. Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430–1497, Chancellor of Florence: The Humanist as Bureaucrat* (Princeton, N.J., 1979).

⁹ On the image of Lorenzo de' Medici see the essays collected in M. Mallett and N. Mann (eds.), *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics* (London, 1996). On Cosimo's, see A. Brown, 'The Humanist Portrait of Cosimo de' Medici, *Pater Patriae*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 24 (1961), pp. 186–221; N. Rubinstein, 'Cosimo "Optimus Civis"' in F.A. Lewis (ed.), *Cosimo 'Il Vecchio' de' Medici, 1389–1464. Essays in Commemoration of the 600th Anniversary of Cosimo de' Medici's Birth* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 5–20 reprinted in N. Rubinstein, *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (2 vols., Rome, 2011), ii, pp. 379–94.

¹⁰ On Platonism in Italian Renaissance political thought, see A. Brown, 'Platonism in Fifteenth-Century Florence and Its Contribution to Early Modern Political Thought', *Journal of Modern History*, 58 (1986), pp. 383–413; J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., Leiden, 1991).

¹¹ On the sources employed by Crinito in his *De honesta disciplina*, see M. Marchiaro, *La biblioteca di Pietro Crinito: manoscritti e libri a stampa della raccolta libraria di un umanista fiorentino* (Turnhout, 2013).

¹² Theodor Zwinger, *Prefatio*, in Francesco Cattani da Diacceto, *Opera omnia*, ed. T. Zwinger (Basel, 1563): 'Platonis dogmata cum Aristotelis praeceptis coniunget.'

¹³ P.O. Kristeller and J. Wardman, *Iter Italicum: A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries* (6 vols., London, 1963–96), ii, pp. 388–9.

¹⁴ On Rucellai's writings, see G. Pellegrini, *L'umanista Bernardo Rucellai e le sue opere storiche* (Livorno, 1920). For a modern edition of Rucellai's major work *De bello italico*, see Bernardo Rucellai, *De bello italico*, ed. D. Coppini (Florence, 2012).

In the 1510s and 20s, the Rucellai Gardens witnessed a radical shift in ideology, however, effectively entering a new phase, from Bernardo Rucellai's elitism to his grandson Cosimo Rucellai's (1495–1519) republicanism: the gardens became the well-known hotbed of republican dissidence generally associated with Machiavelli. Zanobi Buondelmonti (1491–1527), Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556), Battista della Palla (1489–1532) and several others were part of Cardinal Francesco Soderini's (1453–1524) failed conspiracy of 1522 to kill Giulio de' Medici (1478–1534) and restore Piero Soderini to power.¹⁵ Many were exiled. Some were sentenced to death. The Rucellai Gardens eventually lost their former glory.

But in spite of this new phase being shorter-lived, it is given pride of place in modern histories of Renaissance political thought.¹⁶ That is partly because, ever since Delio Cantimori and Felix Gilbert illuminated the intellectual context of Machiavelli's writings, the approach to politics of the Rucellai Gardens, with its emphasis on history and contemporary politics, has come to be viewed as signalling the rise of modern political theory.¹⁷ The main reason, however, rests on the idea of political liberty as non-domination and freedom from arbitrary rule articulated in the later meetings of the Rucellai Gardens and endorsed by Machiavelli in his *Discourses on Livy* written between 1514 and 1519 and published in 1531. This idea, more than the aristocratic ideals of Bernardo Rucellai, came to prominence in England during the Civil War and Interregnum, and informs much modern-day political thought.¹⁸

Ever since Quentin Skinner revealed that the ideology of Renaissance republicanism was synthesised out of Justinian's *Codex* and the writings of Cicero, Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus, the Rucellai Gardens have been viewed as the main forum for discussions of ideas often

¹⁵ On the conspiracy, see J.N. Stephens, *The Fall of the Florentine Republic*; K.J.P. Lowe, *Church and Politics in Renaissance Italy: The Life and Career of Cardinal Francesco Soderini (1452 – 1524)* (Cambridge, 1993).

¹⁶ R. von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewußtsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955), pp. 67–84.

¹⁷ D. Cantimori, 'Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1 (1937), pp. 83–102, p. 86; F. Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton, N.J., 1965).

¹⁸ On early-modern English republicanism see, Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1978), ii; Q.R.D. Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge, 2008); Q.R.D. Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (3 vols., Cambridge, 2002), iii; M. Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1995). On modern-day republicanism, see Q.R.D. Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1998); P. Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford, 1997).

dubbed ‘neo-Roman’.¹⁹ But while the *romanitas* (Roman-ness) of the Gardens has engendered and fostered in recent years a positive discussion about the Roman tradition in early-modern political thought, it has obscured the role of Aristotle in the same context.²⁰ This role deserves reconsideration, not least because Aristotle offered solutions to one of the central problems of republican theory, namely the fragility of its liberty, that is its tendency to eventually give rise to a despotic government. Those scholars who have advocated the importance of Greek political thought in the Renaissance have often misinterpreted the shift in approach and ideology of the Rucellai Gardens with a move away from Platonism towards Aristotelianism.²¹ That, in turn, has opened the floodgates for rather naïve misrepresentations of the role and nature of Aristotelian political theory in the Renaissance.

My intention in this chapter is to discuss the way in which Aristotle’s political thought may have filtered into the conversations of the Rucellai Gardens in the early phase and how it informed the political theory of this group in the second phase. It is my aim to show that Aristotelian ideas may have first been introduced into the Rucellai Gardens by way of Pontano in the early years of the sixteenth century largely as a result of the relevance of Aristotle’s concept of prudence and of Pontano’s eclectic analysis of it to the approach to political theory of the early members of this group. I then go on to show how Aristotle’s political ideas were then used by Bruciolini, one of the group’s later members, to extricate his political thought and the political theory of the group more generally from the impasse of their neo-Roman theory of liberty. Aristotle’s analysis of the dissolution of constitutions supplied the response to the problem of instability that neo-Roman political thought faced as a result of the interrelated ideas of glory through greatness and liberty.

¹⁹ Q.R.D. Skinner, *The Foundations*, i; Q.R.D. Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, ii.

²⁰ For some recent contributions to the historiography on the Roman tradition in the early-modern period, see the essays collected in Q.R.D. Skinner and M. van Gelderen (eds.), *Freedom and Construction of Europe* (2 vols., Cambridge, 2013).

²¹ C. Curcio, *Dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma. Contributo alla storia del pensiero politico italiano da Guicciardini a Botero* (Rome, 1934), pp. 52–3; R. von Albertini, *Das Florentinische Staatsbewusstsein Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat*, pp. 74–90, p. 83.

II. ARISTOTLE AND THE RUCELLAI GARDENS

Aristotle was ushered into the Rucellai Gardens to defend the *vita activa* (active life), the position Crinito rejected in his poem *De sylva Oricellaria*. Like many Renaissance debates, the one on *otium* (contemplative life) versus *negotium* (active life) was ignited by Petrarch (1304–74) in the fourteenth century as he pondered, in a letter to Cicero of 1345, why the Roman senator had foresaken the peaceful ease befitting a man of his age, profession, and fate. ‘How much better it would have been, especially for a philosopher, to have grown old peacefully in the country, meditating ... on that everlasting life, and not on this transitory existence’.²² The letter elicited a response from the statesman and canon lawyer Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder (1370–1444), not to be confused with the later homonymous Italian reformer.²³ Writing on Cicero’s behalf in a letter of 1394, Vergerio remarked that ‘whoever devotes himself to taking part in the government of the republic and in working for the good of everyone is the person to excel everyone else in either character or way of life’.²⁴ Vergerio was following Cicero’s claim in his *De officiis* (*On Duties*) that to apply oneself ‘to statecraft and to conducting great enterprises is more profitable to mankind and contributes more to’ one’s ‘own greatness and renown’ than a life of retirement.²⁵

Defences of the contemplative life were commonplace in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries but were soon at odds with the civic enthusiasm of the likes of Matteo Palmieri (1406–75) and Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459).²⁶ The celebrated Chancellor of Florence Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) gave an emblematic description of what was soon to

²² Petrarch, *Rerum familiarium libri*, ed. A.S. Bernardo (3 vols., Baltimore, Md., 1975–85) iii, 24.3.

²³ On Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder, see J. McManamon, *Pier Paolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator* (Tempe, Ariz., 1996); W.H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators: Essays and Versions* (Cambridge, 1897), pp. 1–92.

²⁴ Pier Paolo Vergerio, *Epistolario*, ed. L. Smith (Rome, 1934), pp. 439–40: ‘Et scripsi enim crebro in libris nostris, et ita semper visum est, prestare omnibus vel genere vel vita quisquis ad administrandam rempublican impertiendosque salutis omnium labores se accommodasset.’

²⁵ Cicero, *De officiis*, ed. W. Miller (Cambridge, Mass., 1913), 1.21.70. On Cicero, Vergerio, and the active life in the Renaissance, see R.G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 338–91.

²⁶ The idea of the contemplative life as a natural end for all Christians goes back to Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum* in *Opera omnia* (9 vols., Florence, 1882–1902), v, 1.7: ‘Secundum enim primam naturae institutionem creatus fuit homo habilis ad contemplationis quietem.’ See E. Rice, *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 30–57.

become the orthodoxy: ‘alienating and removing oneself from the active life [*conversazione*],’ he snidely remarked, ‘suits very well those who, low-minded, are not fit for such tasks’.²⁷ This is not to say though that, following Bruni, vindications of the contemplative life ceased altogether. Several literati of the mid-Cinquecento continued to articulate defences for a life of learning. Some went even further by rejecting both *otium* and *negotium*, a move neatly illustrated by the Italian writer Anton Francesco Doni’s (1513–74) complete nihilism in his embrace of *l’ignoranza da bene* (a life of blessed ignorance) in *La zucca* (*The Pumpkin*) of 1551.²⁸ Neo-Platonism had its effects too. Both Ficino and Giovanni Pico followed Plato’s *Theaetetus* in disdaining those things ‘of little or no account’ that make up the state and ordinary life,²⁹ although a closer look at Ficino’s often flattering letters ostensibly reveals a more balanced view – one in which the *vita contemplativa*, *vita activa*, and *vita voluptuosa* (the life of pleasure) achieve a delicate equilibrium.³⁰

²⁷ Leonardo Bruni, *Vita di Dante e di Petrarca* in *Opere*, ed. P. Viti (Turin, 1996), pp. 533–60, p. 541: ‘Nella qual cosa mi giova riprendere l’errore di molti ignoranti, i quali credono, niuno essere studente, se non quelli, che si nascondono in solitudine ed in ozio; ed io non vidi mai niuno di questi camuffati e rimossi dalla conversazione delli uomini che sapesse tre lettere. Lo ’ngegno alto e grande non ha bisogno di tali tormenti. Anzi è vera conclusione e certissima, che quello, che non appara tosto, non appara mai. Sicchè strarsi e levarsi dalla conversazione è al tutto di quelli, che niente sono atti col loro basso ingegno ad imprendere.’ Cf. Bruni, *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae* in *Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften*, pp. 20–40. See H. Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republicanism in the Age of Tyranny* (Princeton, N.J., 1966), pp. 323–31. See also the essays collected in J. Hankins (ed.), *Renaissance Civic Humanism* (Cambridge, 2000). Cf. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, ed. L. Sasso (Milan, 1995). On Boccaccio’s biography of Dante, see T. Boli, ‘Boccaccio’s *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, or *Dante Resartus*’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 41 (1988), pp. 389–412.

²⁸ Anton Francesco Doni, *La zucca*, in *Le novelle*, ed. P. Pellizzari, (4 vols. (i, ii, ii*, ii**), Rome, 2002), ii*, pp. 190–7. See also Anton Francesco Doni, *I Marmi*, ed. E. Chiorboli (2 vols., Bari, 1928), ii, p. 67: ‘senza gli studi liberali si può pervenire alla sapienza, imperoché, benché sia necessario imparare la virtù, non di meno non s’impara per gli studi liberali.’ On Doni’s nihilism, see B. Croce, *Poeti e scrittori del pieno e del tardo Rinascimento* (3 vols., Bari, 1945–52), i, pp. 260–73. On sixteenth-century attacks on the practical dimension of learning, see P.F. Grender, ‘The Rejection of Learning in Mid-Cinquecento Italy’, *Studies in the Renaissance*, 13 (1966), pp. 230–49.

²⁹ Plato, *Theaetetus*, ed. J. McDowell (Oxford, 1973), 173E. For Pico, see Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *De Hominis dignitate*, ed. E. Garin (Pisa, 2012). On the idea of the contemplative life in the Renaissance, see Rice, *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom*, pp. 58–92.

³⁰ Marsilio Ficino, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, ed. Members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London (9 vols., London, 1975–2012), ix, pp. 46–7: ‘Now we understand by the term ‘wisdom’ spiritual rest and any study of the liberal arts. Under the name of ‘power’ we consider to be included authority in government, civil and military alike, abundance of riches, the lustre of glory, and the active practice of virtue. Finally, we do not doubt that under the name of ‘pleasure’ are contained the delights of the five senses and the avoidance of toil and care. This being so, the poets have called the first path Minerva, the second Juno, and the third Venus... Lorenzo, taught by the oracle of Apollo, has neglected none of these goddesses, for he has seen all three and has also paid homage to all three in accordance with their merits. This is why he has brought back wisdom from Pallas, power from Juno, and poetry, music, and the Graces from Venus.’

The earliest introduction of Aristotelian ideas in the Rucellai Gardens came from within, by way of Diacceto, the academic father of many of the members. Diacceto vindicated the active life in the opening lecture on the *Nicomachean Ethics* he gave to students and members of the Rucellai Gardens, such as Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi (1482–1549), Donato Giannotti (1492–1573), and Antonio Brucioli (1498–1566).³¹ Of course, Book 10 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* argued for the contemplative life over the active, the *nous* (intellect) being the most excellent part of man, an idea that some in the Renaissance, such as Felice Figliucci (1525–90), found hard to digest.³² Aristotle, however, also recognised that man cannot live off contemplation alone. 'Our nature is not self-sufficient for the purpose of contemplation.'³³ Moral virtues thus play an important role insofar as they enable an active man to achieve *eudaimonia* (happiness). 'The life of the man who is active in accordance with virtue will be happy.'³⁴ Diacceto took the stand and from his lectern pleaded to his audience:

I beg you, Florentine Men, try to take control of what is yours... We have in Aristotle a strong guide who, in his book on the *Nicomachean Ethics* (which will be discussed this year), lays forth and defends a rich and exquisite path that brings us a step closer to the gods. When, indeed, stepping onto the path of True Happiness, civic virtues (which in his book are, as it were, freed) appear forthwith at the entrance.³⁵

In other words, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* provided the means to achieve happiness in the civic sphere of life.

³¹ For a list of Diacceto's students, see P.O. Kristeller, 'Francesco Diacceto' in *Studies*, i, pp. 322–36. For a useful table of members of the Rucellai Gardens in the first and second phase, see A. Cummings, *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist: Patrons, Patronage, and the Origins of the Italian Madrigal* (Philadelphia, 2004), pp. 24–5.

³² Felice Figliucci, *De la filosofia morale libri dieci sopra li dieci libri de l'Ethica d'Aristotile* (Rome, 1551), p. 337: 'la contemplazione si potrebbe dire cosa trista, essendo nociva al corpo et impedendo la digestion.' Aristotle also argues for the contemplative life in Book 7 of the *Politics*, see Aristotle, *Politics*, 1333a16–b3. See J.A. Kraye, 'Moral Philosophy' in C.B. Schmitt and Q.R.D. Skinner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 301–86, pp. 334–39.

³³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1178b33–5.

³⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1179a8–9.

³⁵ Diacceto, *In libros De Moribus Aristotelis praefatio* in *Opera omnia* (Basel, 1563), pp. 319–23, p. 323: 'Ergo annitimini quaeso, Viri Florentini, et capeſſite rem veſtram... Habemus Ariſtotelem ſtrenuum ducem, qui in libro de Moribus ad Nicomachum (quem nos praesenti anno ſumus enarraturi) locupletiffime exquisitiſſimeque ſternit munitque viam: qua nobis ad ſuperos gradiendum eſt. Quando quidem verae Felicitatis eadem ingredientibus, virtutes civiles (quaſi in eo libro abſolvit) continuo in veſtibulo occurrunt.'

A more vital Aristotelian presence in the Rucellai Gardens, however, probably came from without, that is by way of Giovanni Pontano's (1426–1503) discussion of Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (prudence) in his *De prudentia* (*On Prudence*) of 1503. Bernardo Rucellai became acquainted with Pontano when he was the Florentine ambassador to Naples in 1486 and discussed with him plans for a history of Charles VIII's (1470–98) invasion of Italy. *De prudentia*, which was edited by Corsi during the early phase of the meetings of the Rucellai Gardens, was published in Florence by Giunta in 1508 and behind its Stoic façade reminiscent of Seneca's moral tracts, hid a strong Aristotelian complexion that would have likely filtered into the conversations of the Rucellai Gardens.³⁶

Aristotle's notion of prudence emerged in Book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* out of a complex conceptual matrix of *aisthesis* (perception), *epistēmē* (scientific knowledge), *technē* (craft), *politikē* (politics), *prohairesis* (decision or purpose), *nous*, *aretē* (virtue) and *deinotes* (cleverness), *sophia* (wisdom), and other psychological capacities.³⁷ Prudence is neither a science nor an art but 'a true and reasoned state or capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man...' and, as pointed out earlier in his book, 'not what is good or expedient for himself'. 'Good action itself is its end.'³⁸ The distinction between prudence and wisdom is couched in the dichotomy between the contingent and the universal. Prudence focuses on particulars, whereas wisdom treats only 'of the timeless and changeless order of the real, the universe in its necessary and permanent and completely perfect being'.³⁹

In the context of a discussion about the relationship between prudence and political wisdom Aristotle emphasised the importance of experience for prudence.

³⁶ On Pontano's *De prudentia*, see M. Santoro 'Il Pontano e l'ideale rinascimentale del 'prudente'', *Giornale italiano di filologia*, 17 (1964), pp. 29–54; L. Monti Sabia, 'Per l'edizione critica del *De Prudentia*' in L. Monti Sabia and S. Monti, *Studi su Giovanni Pontano*, ed. G. Germano (2 vols., Messina, 2010), ii, pp. 1073–93. On Pontano's thought more generally, see G. Toffanin, *Giovanni Pontano: fra l'uomo e la natura* (Bologna, 1937); F. Tateo, *Umanesimo etico di Giovanni Pontano* (Lecce, 1972); V. Prestipino, *Motivi del pensiero umanistico e Giovanni Pontano* (Milan, 1963).

³⁷ On prudence in Aristotle, see C.D.C. Reeve, *Practices of Reason: Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 1992), 67–98; P. Aubenque, *La prudence chez Aristote* (Paris, 1962).

³⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140a25–b5.

³⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139b14–1143b17; H.H. Joachim, *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics: A Commentary*, ed. D.A. Rees (Oxford, 1951), p. 215.

While young men become geometricians and mathematicians and wise in matters like these, it is thought that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found. The cause is that such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience, but a young man has no experience for it is length of time that gives experience.⁴⁰

Experience plays a crucial role. Prudence is ‘the object not of scientific knowledge but of perception, that is not the perception of qualities peculiar to one sense but a perception’ likened to *mallon* (intuitive reason).⁴¹ This practical perception required *ho phronimos* (the prudent man) not only to search for a way to achieve happiness but, once he had found the right type of action, to act on it.⁴²

In the context of a discussion about the relationship between prudence and cleverness Aristotle emphasised the moral dimension of prudence. ‘Cleverness,’ he explains, ‘is to be able to do the things that tend towards the goal we have set before ourselves, and to reach it. Now if the goal is noble, the cleverness is laudable, but if the goal is bad, the cleverness is mere smartness’.⁴³ Cleverness or smartness, a *sine qua non* of prudence, differed in its relationship to prudence in one crucial respect, namely the *telos* (end). Prudence, ‘this eye of the soul, acquires its formed state not without the aid of virtue, as has been said and is plain ... for wickedness perverts us and causes us to be deceived about the starting-points of action. Therefore it is evident that it is impossible to be practically wise without being good’.⁴⁴ Prudence without knowledge of the good is no wisdom at all.⁴⁵

Of course, Thomism forced Aristotle into the Procrustean bed of Christian theology with several implications for the Aristotelian concept of prudence.⁴⁶ In Aquinas’ (1225–74)

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1141b24–1142a15.

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1142a28–1143b5.

⁴² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1112b15–1113a7 and 1144a29–36.

⁴³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144a23–6. I have slightly altered David Ross’s translation for the sake of clarity, choosing to translate *skopos* as ‘goal’ and not as ‘mark’.

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144a30–5.

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144b4–14.

⁴⁶ See D. Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford, 1994). On Aquinas’ Christian synthesis of Aristotelian moral philosophy more generally, see D. Papadis, *Die Rezeption der Nikomachischen Ethik des Aristoteles bei Thomas von Aquin* (Frankfurt, 1980); H. Jaffa, *Thomism and Aristotelianism: A Study of the Commentary by Thomas Aquinas on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago, Ill., 1952). I should like to note here that I borrow an elegant turn of phrase from M.W.F. Stone ‘Review: *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* by D. Westberg’, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 47 (1997), pp. 263–5.

Summa theologiae of 1265–74, grace, for example, brought about a distinction between *prudentia gratuita* (infused prudence) and *prudentia acquisita* (acquired prudence) wholly alien to Aristotle that echoed throughout the Middle Ages.⁴⁷ The Aristotelian distinction between moral and intellectual virtues collapsed, allowing room for the idea of prudence as a virtue halfway between the two, as epitomised in Giles of Rome’s (1243–1316) *De regimine principum* (*On the Rule of Princes*) of 1277.⁴⁸

These changes, though, were overshadowed later by the radically new perspective on prudence brought about by the Renaissance rhetorical tradition. The synergy between rhetoric and prudence was obvious.⁴⁹ In the opening pages of Cicero’s *De oratore* (*On the Orator*) Marcus claimed to Quintus that ‘eloquence is dependent upon the trained skill of the highly prudent men’.⁵⁰ This idea could already be found in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. Rhetoric, for Aristotle,

is in fact concerned with just those things about which we deliberate but of which we have no arts, and with audiences of limited intellectual scope and limited capacity to follow an extended chain of reasoning. And deliberation is about matters that appear to admit of being one way or another; no one consciously deliberates about things that cannot either have been different in the past or be about to be different in the future or be disposed differently in the present, as there would be no profit in it.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, ed. P. Caramelli (3 vols., Turin, 1948–50), 2a2ae, q. 47, art. 14.

⁴⁸ Aquinas, *Scriptum super sententiis* (Parma, 1856–), 3.23.1.4: ‘Videtur quod virtutes morales ab intellectualibus non distinguantur... intellectuales virtutes sunt morales.’ Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, 1.2.2 and 1.2.3: ‘prudentia media inter virtutes morales et intellectuales est’. Giles refers to an Aristotelian commentator that is not Averroes. His reference may be to Albert the Great, *Ethica in Opera omnia*, (32 vols., Paris, 1890), iii, 6.1: ‘prudentia intermedium et intellectualium et practicum habituum, et quo quidem ratiocinatum et rationabile nominatur quo autem intellectus practicus, illud quidem quoniam in mente et ex mente est, hoc autem quoniam circa operabilia fit et de virtutibus sillogizat, oportuit et mediam ordinari de hac doctrina speculativorum et operativorum habituum.’ On prudence in the medieval scholastic tradition, see R. Lambertini, ‘Tra etica e politica: la prudentia del principe nel *De regimine* di Egidio Romano’, *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 3 (1992), pp. 77–144. See also K. Seeskin, ‘The Relation of Prudence and Synderesis to Happiness in the Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle’s Ethics’ in J. Miller (ed.), *The Reception of Aristotle’s Ethics* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 107–24.

⁴⁹ On the Renaissance rhetorical tradition, see P. Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380–1620* (Oxford, 2011), p. 2. On the relationship between humanism and rhetoric, see also J. Monfasani, ‘Humanism and Rhetoric’ in Albert Rabil Jr (ed.), *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms and Legacy* (3 vols., Philadelphia, Penn., 1988), iii, pp. 171–235; J. Murphy, *Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Cal., 1983); H. Plett, *Renaissance-Rhetorik* (Berlin, 1993).

⁵⁰ Cicero, *De oratore*, ed. E.W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 1.5: ‘ego prudentissimorum hominum artibus eloquentiam contineri statuam.’ I have slightly altered the translation, translating *prudentissimorum* as ‘highly prudent’ instead of ‘highly educated’.

⁵¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1357a1–8.

Like prudence, rhetoric entailed deliberating about what may or may not be and was grounded in experience.

To be sure, the Renaissance rhetorical tradition owed a far deeper debt to Rome than to Greece. Of the four pillars of classical rhetoric, the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (*Rhetoric to Herennium*) stood out as the most influential in the *Quattrocento*. Cicero's *De oratore* and *De inventione* (*On Invention*), as well as Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (*Institutes of Oratory*) followed closely. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* lagged behind.⁵² As a lecturer in rhetoric in moral philosophy in Padua, Gasparino Barzizza (1360–1430) was required to lecture on Priscian, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Cicero's *De inventione*; not on Aristotle. Guarino da Verona's (1374–1460) commentary on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* further highlights the Roman bias. Even George of Trebizond's (1395–1472) summa *Rhetoricorum libri V* of 1433–4 was largely coloured by Cicero, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Quintilian, with a few touches of Hermogenes' *Peri Ideon* (*On Ideas of Style*), this in spite of the staggering success that his Latin rendering of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* of around 1443 enjoyed.⁵³ So Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was far from the nearest rhetorical window into the concept of prudence in the Renaissance.

Roman rhetoric though was imbued with Aristotelian philosophy; nowhere is this more evident than with respect to prudence as manifest in the passage in Cicero's *De officiis* (*On Duties*) which equates *prudentia* with *phronesis*.⁵⁴ Links can also be found in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*:

⁵² A list of Renaissance rhetorical textbooks and translations can be found in L. Green and J. Murphy, *Renaissance Rhetoric: Short-Title Catalogue 1460–1700* (Aldershot, 1988). The book forms the backbone of Peter Mack's survey of Renaissance Rhetoric.

⁵³ On Barzizza, see R.G.G. Mercer, *The Teaching of Gasparino Barzizza: With Special Reference to his Place in Paduan Humanism* (London, 1979). On Guarino, see R. Sabbadini, *Guarino Veronese e gli archetipi di Celso e Plauto con una appendice sull'Aurispia* (Livorno, 1886); G. Bertoni, *Guarino da Verona fra letterati e cortigiani a Ferrara (1429–1460)* (Geneva, 1921). On George of Trebizond, see J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of his Rhetoric and Logic* (Leiden, 1976).

⁵⁴ Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.153: 'Princepsque omnium virtutum illa sapientia, quam σοφία Graeci vocant – prudentiam enim, quam Graeci φρόνησις dicunt, aliam quandam intellegimus, quae est rerum expetendarum fugiendarumque scientia...'. The literature on Roman rhetoric's debt to Aristotle is too vast and scattered to be listed here. See, however, F. Solmen, 'The Aristotelian Tradition in Ancient Rhetoric', *The American Journal of Philology*, 62 (1941), pp. 35–50 and pp. 169–90 (the article is divided into two parts, one part is in part 1 of volume 62 and the other part is in part 2 of volume 62).

The honourable is divided into the right and the praiseworthy. The right is that which is done in accord with virtue and duty. Subheads under the right are prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. Prudence is intelligence capable, by a certain judicious method, of distinguishing good and bad; likewise the knowledge of an art is called prudence; and again, a well-furnished memory, or experience in diverse matters, is termed prudence... We shall be using the topics of prudence in our discourse if we compare advantages and disadvantages, counselling the pursuit of the one and the avoidance of the other; if we urge a course in a field in which we have a technical knowledge of the ways and means whereby each detail should be carried out; or if we recommend some policy in a matter whose history we can recall either from direct experience or hearsay – in this instance we can easily persuade our hearers to the course we wish by adducing the precedent.⁵⁵

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero's *De inventione* both listed prudence as one of four cardinal virtues originally outlined by Plato in his *Republic* and *Protagoras* and then re-developed by Aristotle.⁵⁶

By viewing *prudentia* as a sine qua non of oratory, Cicero was drawing clear ties between his portrait of the *doctus orator* (wise orator) and the prudent man of Aristotle.

It is the part of the orator, when advising on affairs of supreme importance, to unfold his opinion as a man having authority: his duty too it is to arouse a listless nation, and to curb its unbridled impetuosity. By one and the same power of eloquence the deceitful among mankind are brought to destruction, and the righteous to deliverance. Who more passionately than the orator can encourage to virtuous conduct, or more zealously than he reclaim from vicious courses? Who can more austere censure the wicked, or more gracefully praise men of worth? Whose invective can

⁵⁵ Pseudo-Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, ed. H. Caplan (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), 3.3–4: 'Honesta res dividitur in rectum et laudabile. Rectum est quod cum virtute et officio fit. Id dividitur in prudentiam, iustitiam, fortitudinem, modestiam. Prudentia est calliditas quae ratione quadam potest dilectum habere bonorum et malorum. Dicitur item prudentia scientia cuiusdam artificii; item appellatur prudentia rerum multarum memoria et usus conplurium negotiorum... Prudentiae partibus utemur in dicendo si comoda cum incommodis conferemus, cum alterum sequi, vitare alterum cohortemur; aut si qua in re cohortemur aliquid cuius rei aliquam disciplinam poterimus habere quo modo aut qua quidque ratione fieri oporteat; aut si suadebimus quippam cuius rei gestae aut praesentem aut auditam memoriam poterimus habere – qua in re facile id quo velimus exemplo allato persuadere possumus.'

⁵⁶ Cicero, *De inventione*, ed. H.M. Hubbell (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 2.159–160: 'Quod aut totum aut aliqua ex parte propter se petitur, honestum nominabimus. Quare, cum eius duae partes sint, quarum altera simplex, altera iuncta sit, simplicem prius consideremus. Est igitur in eo genere omnes res una vi atque uno nomine amplexa virtus. Nam virtus est animi habitus naturae modo atque rationi consentaneus. Quamobrem omnibus eius partibus cognitis tota vis erit simplicis honestatis considerata. Habet igitur partes quattuor: prudentiam, iustitiam, fortitudinem, temperantiam. Prudentia est rerum bonarum et malarum neutrumque scientia. Partes eius: memoria, intellegentia, providentia'; Plato, *Republic*, ed. R. Waterfield (Oxford, 2008), 426A–35C; Plato, *Protagoras*, ed. C.C.W. Taylor (Oxford, 2009), 330b.

more forcibly subdue the power of lawless desire? Whose comfortable words can soothe grief more tenderly?⁵⁷

Aristotle's understanding of prudence meant that the prudent man would seek to attain only the human good. By sharing this definition, Cicero's wise orator shared the same moral and political mission, leaving little to tell him apart from Aristotle's prudent man.

In other words, rather than providing a radically diverse concept of prudence, Roman rhetoric disseminated the Aristotelian one. Cicero's dialogues though provided less an Aristotelian analysis of prudence than models of the *prudens vir* (prudent man), Demosthenes being perhaps the most obvious example in *Brutus*, *Orator*, *De optimo genere oratorum* (*On the Ideal Orator*), that is an ostensible introduction to a translation of Demosthenes' *On the Crown* and Aeschines' *Against Ctesiphon*, and *De oratore*.⁵⁸ This provision, the practice of illustrating prudence by way of exempla, had links to Aristotle's understanding of deliberative oratory expounded in the *Rhetoric*.⁵⁹ But rather than being a Greek bequest to Renaissance moral philosophy, this emphasis on models was a Roman one and it came to the fore in Pontano's *De prudentia*.

Pontano's Aristotelianism is manifest throughout his philosophy. He referred to his *De magnanimitate* (*On Magnanimity*) of 1498 as *Aristotelea* (Aristotelia) and even before then he had shown a deep appreciation of Aristotle in his dialogue *Charon* of 1469.⁶⁰ Unfolding by the banks of the river Styx, in the underworld of classical mythology, the dialogue had 'Minos' inform 'Charon' and 'Aeacus' how 'it was a memorable day among the dead when that well known Stagirite who called himself a Peripatetic was called into judgement' – Aristotle's

⁵⁷ Cicero, *De oratore*, 2.35: 'Huius est in dando consilio de maximis rebus cum dignitate explicata sententia; eiusdem et languentis populi incitatio, et effrenati moderatio. Eadem facultate et fraus hominum ad perniciem, et integritas ad salutem vocatur. Quis cohortari ad virtutem ardentius, quis a vitii acrius revocare? Quis vituperare improbos asperius, quis laudare bonos ornatius? Quis cupiditatem vehementius frangere accusando potest? Quis maerorem levare mitius consolando?'

⁵⁸ Cicero, *Brutus* and *Orator*, ed. G.L. Hendrickson (Cambridge, Mass., 1952); Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum*, ed. H.M. Hubbell (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), 2.6: 'Itaque nemo est orator qui Demostheni se similem nolit esse.'

⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1368a29.

⁶⁰ Giovanni Pontano, *De magnanimitate*, ed. F. Tateo (Florence, 1969), p. 2. On magnanimity in Aristotle, see W.F.R. Hardie, 'Magnanimity in Aristotle's *Ethics*', *Phronesis*, 1 (1978), pp. 63–79.

presence was welcome.⁶¹ Pontano's dialogue also offered a familiar humanist critique of scholastic philosophy and defence of Aristotle's eloquence.⁶²

Mercury. You would hardly keep from laughing, Charon, if I tell you how wittily a rhetorician recently mocked a certain loquacious little philosopher. For when that fellow was trying to distort Aristotle's doctrines, the rhetorician said: 'Audience, I must inform you that my dispute is not with a philosopher, but with a shoemaker: for it is characteristic of a shoemaker to soften leather with his teeth; this is what our friend here does in expounding on the words of Aristotle. Therefore, philosopher, you must take care not to leave your molars in the skin.' This, Charon, is the origin of that now well-worn saying: 'A theologian needs good teeth.'

Charon. The rhetorician was extremely witty, but perhaps Aristotle's obscurity might excuse both the philosopher and the theologian.

Mercury. It's not at all a question of obscurity; but, as it seems to me, the cause of this thing is twofold: first, that today's philosophers are ignorant of literature, of which Aristotle was in fact an important author; second, that dialectic has been corrupted first by Germans and Gauls, then also by our people, and they are now making a hash of it, too.

Mercury elegantly characterised a position that was chiefly associated with Bruni in Florence. 'For true learning,' as Bruni related in his *De studiis et litteris* (*On Study and Literature*) of 1422–9, was not 'that vulgar threadbare jargon which satisfies those who devote themselves to Theology; but... knowledge of the realities – Facts and Principles – united with a perfect familiarity with the Letters and the art of expression'.⁶³ Pontano's Aristotelianism, however,

⁶¹ Pontano, *Dialogues*, ed. J.H. Gaisser (Cambridge, Mass., 2012), p. 15. Charon is the ferryman of the Hades, Dante's 'vecchio, bianco per antico pelo... che 'ntorno a li occhi avea di fiamme rote' of his *Inferno*, see *The Divine Comedy*, ed. C.S. Singleton (6 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1990), *Inferno*, 3.79–96. See also Virgil, *Aeneid*, ed. H.R. Fairclough and G.P. Goold (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 6.298–301. Minos was King of Knossos. He reigned over Crete and was responsible for commanding Daedalus to design the labyrinth that held the Minotaur. See Homer, *The Iliad*, ed. R. Fitzgerald and G.S. Kirk (Oxford, 2008), 13.450 and *The Odyssey*, ed. W. Shewring and G.S. Kirk (Oxford, 2008), 11.321. Aeacus was one of the Hadean judges. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Books 9 to 14*, ed. G.P. Goold and J.F. Miller (Cambridge, Mass., 1916), 13.25 and Horace, *Carmen in Odes and Epodes*, ed. N. Rudd (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 2.13.22.

⁶² For a typical humanist critique, see Philipp Melanchthon, 'Responsio ad Picum Mirand.' in *Opera omnia*, ed. C.G. Bretschneider (28 vols., Halle, 1874) ix, pp. 687–703. A translation is available in Q. Breen, 'Melanchthon's Reply to G. Pico della Mirandola', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 13 (1952), pp. 413–26, pp. 414–5. Melanchthon was relying on Cicero's *Academica* and Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*, see Cicero, *Academica priora* or *Academica II* (*Lucullus*), ed. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 2.38.119 and Quintilian, *De institutio oratoria*, ed. H.E. Butler (Cambridge, Mass., 1920), 10.1.83: 'Quid reliquorum Socraticorum elegantiam? Quid Aristotelum? Quem dubito scientia rerum an scriptorum copia an eloquendi [usu] suavitate an inventionum acumine an varietate operum clariorem putem.'

⁶³ Bruni, *De studiis et litteris* in *Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften*, pp. 5–19. I quote from the English translation in W. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators*, pp. 123–33, pp. 123–4.

went far beyond that of Bruni. Thinking little of translation, Pontano had no problem disposing of the original flow of the text and creating his own, colouring Aristotelian moral philosophy with his personal experiences.⁶⁴

Language and rhetoric play a pivotal role in Pontano's thought.⁶⁵ In the *De obedientia* (*On Obedience*) of 1470 he vindicated the marriage of wisdom and eloquence in moral philosophy, an idea that went back to Petrarch's *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia* (*On His Own Ignorance and That of Many Others*) of 1367.⁶⁶ Pontano's *De sermone* (*On Conversation*) of 1499 tied the knot even tighter by wording an understanding of language and rhetoric as instrumental to reason.⁶⁷ His *De prudentia* reflected this.

Couched in Aristotle's moral philosophy, Pontano's *De prudentia* describes prudence as both an active and intellective faculty grounded in experience.⁶⁸ Although not a moral virtue in itself, it was seen as the force that drives individuals to moral action and therefore closely

⁶⁴ M. Roick, 'Mercury in Naples: The Moral and Political Thought of Giovanni Pontano' (Ph.D. thesis, European University Institute, 2009), pp. 150–9. Note that there are no references to V. Kahn's important and relevant *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), pp. 67–75 – though the thesis does mention her earlier article (see the footnote below).

⁶⁵ V. Kahn, 'Giovanni Pontano's Rhetoric of Prudence' in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 16 (1983), pp. 16–34; L. Nauta, 'Philology as Philosophy: Giovanni Pontano on Language, Meaning, and Grammar', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 72 (2011), pp. 481–502.

⁶⁶ Pontano, *De obedientia* in *Opera omnia* (3 vols., Basel, 1538), i, p. 1: 'Etenim considerabam eos qui nunc philosophantur, genus hoc dicendi (quanquam pervetus ipsum quidem & philosophorum proprium) omnino improbare: aridas quasdam nimisque ieiunas, ac parum iucundas auditoribus dissertationes sectantis: quas aut ipsi soli legant, aut pauci admodum eorum similes: ut mihi quidem videantur non tam docere velle quam litigare: nec ita studere, ut obscuras, atque abditas res aperiant: quam inculcare atque deiicere de gradu velle suo philosophiam... Quod si qua in re utilis ac necessaria esset eloquentia, ut certe est in rebus plurimis, tunc eam maxime requiri debere: cum de virtute ageretur, comprimendis affectibus: quando quidem hoc opus hic labor esset: ut poeta inquit. Et vero si duobus his, ratione atque oratione, a brutis maxime differimus, seiungendae & si nunquam alias, tunc multo minus videntur esse, cum animi informantur...'

⁶⁷ Pontano, *De sermone*, ed. F. Bistagne (Paris, 2008), 1.1.4: 'Igitur ut ratio dux est ac magistra dirigendis actionibus virtutibusque comparandis, oratio vero mentis est interpres rationisque ipsius instrumentum quasi quoddam, siquidem consultationes, consilia, ratiocinationes ipsae denique dissertationibus constant, dissertationes vero verbis, sic eadem ipsa oratio instrumentum quoque rationi et quasi materiam sumministrat, in qua versetur.'

⁶⁸ E. de Tejada, *Napoles hispanico* (5 vols., Madrid, 1958–), i, p. 69; S. Lupi, 'Il "De Sermone" di Giovanni Pontano', *Filologia Romanza*, 2 (1955), pp. 366–417, p. 378.

resembled a virtue. ‘Prudence is neither science nor art, but dwells in action’.⁶⁹ This view placed Pontano in the civic humanist corner of the active-contemplative life debate.⁷⁰

No one is born wise... similarly no one is born prudent, since prudence is acquired through practice and experience. It is obvious that prudence resides in old men who are skilled. Ripe fruits are to trees what prudence and perfect conduct is to the elderly and men of great experience. For childhood is something almost like flowers, in adolescence we are immature and unready, unexperienced and ill-tempered men.⁷¹

The emphasis on experience meant that in the final book of *De prudentia* Pontano moved out of Greek hands and into Roman ones, blending Aristotelian analysis with Roman rhetorical practice.

It is possible to contend that Pontano’s good standing in the Rucellai Gardens, evidenced by Corsi’s edition of his *De prudentia*, was informed by his marriage of Aristotelian moral philosophy and a Ciceronian view of history as a storeroom of examples, as a gateway to experience, and as a key to prudence.⁷² Crinito’s *De honesta disciplina* had made clear that the conversations of the Rucellai Gardens centred on politics, the best state, and modern examples of successful government. Rucellai’s own *De urbe Roma* turned to history for guidance. Pontano’s *De prudentia* not only offered a shared defence of the active life and a

⁶⁹ Pontano, *De prudentia* in *Opera omnia*, i, p. 345–6: ‘Prudentiam neque scientiam esse, neque artem, sed in actionibus versari.’ Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1140b1–5. See also, Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, art. 2.

⁷⁰ Pontano, *De prudentia*, i, pp. 287–8: ‘Neque enim bene constitutus vir existimandus est aut solivagus, aut sui tantum studiosus atque amator, vivensque in solitudine. Qui igitur ea aget, quae et viro et cive digna sunt bono, et paterfamilias frugī, quique pietatem colet atque iustitiam, Deo, patriae, parentibus, cognatis, amicis, ipsi hominum generi, quoad eius facultates tulerint, iusta honestaque praestiterit, qui laboribus atque aerumnis non cesserit, neque succumbet adversis, abhorrebit a turpibus, sequetur honesta, atque commendatione digna, ipsamque in primis naturam ratione et duce et comite, aut hic bene dicetur vivere, aut nomen ipsum bene vivendi futile iudicandum est atque omnino vanum.’ See also Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 57, art. 5: ‘Prudentia est virtus maxime necessaria ad vitam humanam: bene enim vivere consistit in bene operari: ad hoc autem quod aliquis bene operetur, non solum requiritur quid faciat, sed etiam quomodo faciat: ut scilicet secundum electionem recta operetur, non solum ex impetu aut passione.’

⁷¹ Pontano, *De prudentia*, i, p. 367: ‘... ut a natura sapiens est nemo... sic nullus etiam natura ab ipsa prudens, quando is habitus exercitatione comparatur rerumque humanarum usu. Quo sit ut prudentiae laus omnis in sensibus constat quam maxime exercitatis. ... Quaeque fructuum in arboribus est maturitas, ea in sensibus quam exercitatissimis prudentia est agendique absoluta maximeque spectata perfectio. Nam pueritiae flores quasi quidam sunt, et in adolescentia cruda et acerba omnia cuius usus sunt nulli, & affectiones ipsae male temperatae.’

⁷² Cicero, *De oratore*, 2.31: ‘Historia vero testis temporum, lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae, nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia, nisi oratoris, immortalitati commendatur?’

familiar pathway to virtue. It vindicated the modern approach to politics of the Rucellai Gardens by marrying Greek philosophy to Roman rhetoric. ‘Once examples are considered’, he wrote, ‘(seeing that in them resides a particularly strong effectiveness, which Greeks call *energia*) you will easily understand what the prudent man ought to do’.⁷³ Pontano went on to breathe new life into the Aristotelian idea of prudence as an active moral force grounded in experience. He did so by giving mostly Livian examples of *virī prudentes* (prudent men) in the last book of his *De prudentia*. Of the myriad models provided by Pontano in his treatise, however, none stood out quite as much as Pontano’s own example in the autobiography somewhat arrogantly entitled *De vita perfecta* (*On the Perfect Life*) in the opening book of *De prudentia*.⁷⁴

Pontano’s position vis-à-vis history and prudence foreshadowed not just the conversations of the Rucellai Gardens but the wider political discourse of the Renaissance and early-modern period. Guillaume Budé (1467–1540) echoed Pontano’s thoughts in his *De l’institution du prince* (*On the Institution of the Prince*) of 1514.

With history we see both the past and the present as if in a mirror. Through history men can acquire great prudence and best understand the things that best inform their advice to princes... For there is nothing that makes men wiser than to understand the state of the world and human nature and to foresee events that may unfold and how to provide for them or obviate them, and what historians say. Prudence is thus acquired by the man of sound judgement: by reading about and understanding the government of the world or the past, and how all the republics and great

⁷³ Pontano, *De prudentia*, i, p. 390: ‘... consideratis [exempla] (quoniam in exemplis valentissima quaedam inest efficacia, utque Graeci dicunt energia) facile intellegitis, quid prudentem deceat.’ Also known as *entelecheia*, Pontano’s reference is to Book 9 of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, ed. H. Lawson-Tancred (London, 1999). See S. Menn, ‘The Origins of Aristotle’s Concept of *Energeia*’, *Ancient Philosophy*, 14 (1994), pp. 73–114.

⁷⁴ Pontano, *De prudentia*, i, pp. 307–11, p. 311: ‘Quodque vel cum primis fuit difficile, attritis, ac pene ad internitionem perductis Ferdinandi rebus, bis inter illum, et Innocentium octavum Pontificem maximum exortum et conflatum bellum composui. Ferrariensi vero bello, quod accerrime illatum a Venetis fuerat cum me gessi, ut mea potissimum opera, meisque consiliis in ipso belli ardore secuta pax fuerit, cum Italiae totius quiete, et otio. Ex eoque in rerum administrationibus et consultandis rebus, capiendisque consiliis permultos annos tenuerim, ea cum integritate, et fide, ut meis de administrationibus, neque tunc sit questus, neque hodie queratur ullus.’ One would have grounds to argue that arrogant autobiographies were the norm in the Renaissance. Another famous example is Joseph Scaliger’s, brought to my attention by A. Grafton, ‘Joseph Scaliger’s Edition of Catullus (1577) and the Traditions of Textual Criticism in the Renaissance’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 38 (1975), pp. 155–81. See Joseph Scaliger, *Autobiography*, ed. G.W. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass., 1927).

monarchies ended; by what faults they have fallen into corruption or by what means they have survived and been powerful and prosperous for long; and by that which we find written about in the Bible and the seventh [read fifth] book of Aristotle's *Politics*... For prudence is obtained chiefly by way of experience and by looking at past examples recorded in history.⁷⁵

Jean Bodin (1530–96) would make a similar point in his *Methodus ad facilem cognitionem historiarum* (*Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*) of 1566.⁷⁶ It would in fact become commonplace among Enlightenment thinkers. Prudence, for John Locke (1632–1704), lay ‘in knowing Men and Manners. History teaches this best, next to Experience; which is the only effectual way to get a Knowledge of the World’.⁷⁷ The synergy between the prudent man of Aristotle and the *doctus orator* of Cicero was one of the elements that helped free Aristotle from the confines of academic ivory towers, introducing him into the gardens of Florence and allowing him to seep into patricians’ literary and political conversation and spread across Europe.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Guillaume Budé, *L'institution du prince* in C. Bontems, L.P. Raybaud and J.P. Brancourt, *Le prince dans la France des xvi^e et xvii^e siècles* (Paris, 1965), pp. 77–139, pp. 90–1: ‘Par lesquelles histoires on voit quasy comme en ung mirouer les choses passées comme les présentes, par la considération desquelles, les hommes peuvent grandement acquérir prudence et mieulx consulter les matières qui s’adonnent et offrent es conseils des princes... car il n’est rien qui tant face les hommes saiges que d’entendre l’estat du monde et la condicion de la nature humaine, et préveoir les cas qui peuvent escheoir, et comment on y peut pourveoir et obvier, et est ce que les historiens enseignent. Ceste prudence ainsi acquise par l’homme de bon jugement en lisant et considérant le gouvernement du monde ou temps passé, et comment tous royaumes et grandes monarchies ont prins fins, et par quelles faultes ilz sont tombez en inconvenient, ou par qualz moyens ils se sont longuement conservez et entretnuz en puissance et prospérité, est celle don’t il est script en l’éclesiastique ou septiesme chapitre selon l’interprétation grecque... car prudence vient pour la plus part par expérience et par observation des exemples du temps passé dont histoire est le registre’ (my own emphasis). Cf. Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, ed. J.C. and P.E. Bondanella (Oxford, 2008), pp. 13–14. See J.H.M. Salmon, ‘Cicero and Tacitus in Sixteenth-Century France’, *The American Historical Review*, 85 (1980), pp. 307–31. The standard sixteenth-century biography of Budé was written by Louis Le Roy. See Le Roy, *Vita G. Budaei* (Paris, 1540). On Budé, see J. Plattard, *Guillaume Budé (1468–1540) et les origines de l’humanisme français* (Paris, 1923); D. McNeill, *Guillaume Budé and Humanism in the Reign of Francis I* (Geneva, 1975).

⁷⁶ Jean Bodin, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, ed. B. Reynolds (New York, N.Y., 1945), p. 73. On Bodin, see Y.C. Zarka, *Jean Bodin: nature, histoire, droit et politique* (Paris, 1996).

⁷⁷ John Locke, *Correspondence*, ed. E. DeBeers (8 vols., Oxford, 1976–89), i, n. 3328. On Locke’s political thought, see J. Dunn, *The Political Thought of John Locke: An Historical Account of the Argument of The ‘Two Treatises of Government’* (Cambridge, 1969). Unfortunately, like all accounts of Locke’s thought, it pays little attention to his understanding of prudence. Parenthetically, though I would never suggest a link between Pontano and Locke, I wonder about the reception of Pontano in England (which remains entirely sunk in obscurity).

⁷⁸ Bruni, *Praemisio quaedam ad evidentiam novae translationis Politicorum Aristotelis* in *Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften*, pp. 73–4, p. 74: ‘Excitavit quoque me utilitas maxima, quam ex interpretatione *Ethicorum* provenisse conspexeram. Homines enim ingenue eruditi, quos pellebat ita postmodum eos libros complexi sunt, ut in maximam lucem illarum rerum cognitio sit perducta.’ This passage reveals how

III. POLITICS IN THE RUCELLAI GARDEN

Let us now turn from a work that may have influenced the conversations of the Rucellai Gardens to one that was influenced by them. Brucioli's *Dialogi della morale filosofia* (*Dialogues on Moral Philosophy*), published in three editions between 1526 and 45, reveal that by the 1510s and 20s Aristotle had acquired new relevance for the political thought of the Florentine group.⁷⁹ Composed in Venice while Brucioli was in exile for his involvement in the failed anti-Medicean coup of 1522 and set far from Florence in towns such as Urbino and Pesaro (meeting-places for fellow exiles), these dialogues were written, however, with Brucioli's mind firmly turned towards the Rucellai Gardens.⁸⁰ Nowhere is this more evident than in the *Dialogo della repubblica* (*Dialogue on the Republic*). The Italian poet and dramatist, Giangiorgio Trissino (1478–1550), the central character of this dialogue and Brucioli's mouthpiece, had visited the Gardens in 1513.⁸¹ Machiavelli, Cosimo Rucellai's most infamous guest, was another of the four interlocutors in the dialogue.⁸² The dialogue itself opens with Machiavelli sadly reminiscing about the gardens of Florence.⁸³

The extent of Brucioli's debt to Rucellai's circle is evident from the first few pages of the *Dialogo della repubblica*. 'Having from the world of letters the knowledge of well-established laws and the constitution of ancient republics and knowledge of modern ones and so of their defects and shortcomings, and knowing the opinions of the most lauded authors, we shall

Bruni had already begun tearing down the walls of obscurity that encased Aristotelian philosophy in the Renaissance.

⁷⁹ Antonio Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. A. Landi (Chicago, Ill., 1982). The *Dialogi* were published in Venice in 1526. A second edition came out in 1537–8 and a third in 1544–5. Landi uses the third edition of this text. Cantimori was the first to spot the importance of these dialogues for our understanding of the conversations of the Rucellai Gardens in his article 'Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism'.

⁸⁰ The standard intellectual biography of Brucioli is G. Spini, *Tra Rinascimento e riforma: Antonio Brucioli* (Florence, 1940). See also E. Boillet, *Antonio Brucioli. Humanisme et évangélisme entre réforme et contre-réforme* (Paris, 2008).

⁸¹ B. Morsolin, *Giangiorgio Trissino: monografia d'un gentiluomo letterato nel secolo XVI* (Florence, 1892), pp. 56–9.

⁸² On Machiavelli's time in the Rucellai Gardens, see C. Vivanti, *Niccolò Machiavelli: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton, N.J., 2013), pp. 103–8.

⁸³ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 99: 'Niccolò. Io, tirato dalla amenità e vaghezza di questo luogo, pensavo alle ville e ai bei giardini della nostra repubblica, i quali così male possiamo godere'.

talk,’ the character Messer Giangiorgio declares, ‘of a republic as it ought to be with no bias towards a particular kind.’ And ‘not according to those impossible ones that have been imagined by some,’ adds another interlocuter, the Cardinal Bernardo Salviati (1495–1568), in an obvious jab at Thomas More’s (1478–1535) *Utopia* of 1516.⁸⁴ This method reflected the prudent approach in the Rucellai Gardens to the subject of politics and echoed Machiavelli’s own method in *The Prince* of 1513 and *Discourses on Livy*. Writing to Zanobi Buondelmonti and Cosimo Rucellai in the preface of the *Discourses*, Machiavelli claimed that it was from ‘long experience [of modern affairs] and continual study [of ancient history]’ that he had extracted his maxims.⁸⁵ His aim was to possess ‘a true understanding of the histories’ so that one ‘may more easily derive from them that practical knowledge one must seek’.⁸⁶ Brucioli would later draw the parallel between himself and Machiavelli into even sharper relief. His intentions would be to look at ‘what may or may not be reasonable’ and ‘to speak according to experience, which often is the mother of knowledge’.⁸⁷

The Aristotelian complexion of Brucioli’s *Dialogi* is undeniable. Brucioli condenses Aristotle’s political thought into three dialogues, the *Dialogo della repubblica*, *Dialogo delle leggi della repubblica* (*Dialogue on the Laws of the Republic*), and *Dialogo della tirannide* (*Dialogue on Tyranny*).

⁸⁴ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 101: ‘M. Giangiorgio ... avendo dalle lettere la scienza delle bene ordinate leggi e ordine delle republike antiche e la cognizione delle moderne e così de’ loro difetti e mancamenti, e sapendo quello che ne sentino i più laudati scrittori, tratteremo della repubblica quale dovessi esser senza rispetto d’alcuna particolarità.’ On More’s reception in Renaissance Italy, see L. Firpo, ‘Thomas More e la sua fortuna in Italia’ in L. Firpo (ed.), *Studi sull’Utopia* (Florence, 1977), pp. 31–58; E. Nelson, ‘Utopia through Italian Eyes: Thomas More and the Critics of Civic Humanism’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59 (2006), pp. 1029–57. On Italian Renaissance utopias more generally, see C. Curcio, *Utopisti e riformatori sociali del Cinquecento* (Bologna, 1941); E. Garin, ‘La Cité idéale de la Renaissance italienne’ in J. Lameer et al., *Les Utopies à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1963).

⁸⁵ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, pp. 13–14. I have added in square brackets Machiavelli’s words from *The Prince*, ed. P. Bondanella and M. Viroli (Oxford, 2005), pp. 5–6. On Machiavelli and prudence, see E. Graver, *Machiavelli and the History of Prudence* (Madison, Wis., 1987); H.C. Mansfield, Jr., *Machiavelli’s Virtue* (Chicago, Ill., 1966), pp. 38–45; H.C. Mansfield, Jr., ‘Machiavelli and Political Science’, *The American Political Science Review*, 75 (1981), pp. 293–305.

⁸⁶ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, pp. 17–8. See also Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 54–5: ‘For many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist... I shall set aside fantasies about rulers, then, and consider what happens in fact.’ On Machiavelli’s method, see L. Althusser, *Écrits philosophiques et politiques*, ed. F. Matheron (2 vols., Paris, 1995), ii, translated in English under the title *Machiavelli and Us*, ed. G. Elliott (London, 1999); A.J. Parel, ‘Introduction: Machiavelli’s Method and His Interpreters’ in A.J. Parel (ed.), *The Political Calculus: Essays on Machiavelli’s Philosophy* (Toronto, 1972), pp. 3–32.

⁸⁷ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 104: ‘M. Giangiorgio. Io non volgio che noi ora ricerchiamo quello che sia ragionevole o non ragionevole, a altro luogo questo riserbando, ma che secondo l’esperienza si parli, che bene spesso è madre della scienza.’

Adherence to the general flow of the *Politics* is strict. Brucioli simply revises the structure, placing the themes of Aristotle's Books 7 and 8 between those of Books 3 and 4.⁸⁸ Evidence for the Aristotelian undertone of these dialogues emerges from the very definition of republic that Brucioli gives to Trissino.

M. Giangiorgio. I therefore say that the republic is nothing other than a society or group of people made up of several families residing in one place, in several houses, whose goal is self-sufficiency for the sake of the good and just life. Now this society or group of people that I speak of, better suits man than any other animal, being that naturally he is the most sociable among them, man being the only one, among all mortal things, to have language, for it is certainly an indication of what is advantageous and what is harmful.⁸⁹

Like most Renaissance thinkers, Brucioli followed this statement with a criticism of Plato's theory of communality.⁹⁰ 'If in a city women are shared like all other things, what will happen will be that every single citizen will have in one way a thousand children and in another way none at all, and not being sure of having any, he will therefore take less care of them than if he had only one.'⁹¹

Brucioli's debt to Aristotle is sometimes explicit. Having raced through the different constitutions according to the Platonic-Aristotelian model and having outlined the pros and cons of each one in just a few lines, Brucioli then pins his notion of a well-ordered republic on the same moral principle underlying the *Politics*. 'When Aristotle defines the happy life, he describes it as being lived according to virtue without hindrance, and that virtue is a certain

⁸⁸ E. Barker, 'The Life of Aristotle and the Composition and Structure of the *Politics*', *The Classical Review*, 45 (1931), pp. 162–72, summarises the problem of the structure of the *Politics* brilliantly. For the sake of the argument, I will not follow Brucioli's ordering.

⁸⁹ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 102: '*M. Giangiorgio.* Dico adunque la repubblica niente altro essere che una società e compagnia la quale di più famiglie in uno medesimo luogo, in più case abitanti, è fatta, la quale ha in sé il fine di tutta la sufficienza, costituita per causa di vivere bene e rettamente. Ora questa tale società, o compagnia che io dica più sovente allo uomo che a nessuno altro animale, essendo per natura più sociabile che tutti gli altri, avendo solamente l'uomo, fra tutte le cose mortali, l'uso del parlare, perché la voce è certamente uno significamento di quello che è giocondo e di quello che è molesto.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. E. Barker and R.F. Stalley (Oxford, 2009), 1252b15–1253b14.

⁹⁰ On the reception of Plato's theory of communality in the Renaissance, see P. Garnsey, *Thinking about Property: From Antiquity to the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 31–58.

⁹¹ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 105: '*M. Giangiorgio.* Se in una città sono le donne comuni come tutte l'altre cose, avverrà che ogni cittadino particolare arà in uno certo modo mille figliuoli, e in uno certo altro nessuno, non avendo alcuno di certo, e così meno si curerà di tutti che se egli ne avesse uno solo...'

laudable mean, that evades the viceless extremes... accordingly, it is necessary that the constitution of a republic be a mixed one.⁹² The famous humanist Lorenzo Valla (1407–57) had rejected the idea of virtue as a mean in his *Retractatio totius dialecticae* (*Restructuring of All Dialectics*) of 1439.⁹³ However, by the time *mediocrità* (the mean) became the founding principle of Brucioli's political ideas, it had already been rescued by none other than Pontano in a somewhat conservative humanist move that aimed a clever jab at Valla, one of Pontano's 'insignificant philosophers' in *De fortitudine* (*On Fortitude*) of 1481.⁹⁴

The dissolution of constitutions is of central concern to Brucioli's *Dialogi*. Brucioli goes into detail about how a republic ought to be instituted and safeguarded. After all, the whole conversation between the figures of Trissino, Machiavelli, Salviati and Gianiacopo Leonardi da Pesaro (1498–1562) springs from the realisation of the instability of present republics.

M. Giangiorgio. What need is there to be amazed? It has always been the case that republics, either because they were badly instituted or because they were with time corrupted by the evil of its citizens, failed to be republics, or were completely undone. This has been the case so much so that up until our times there has not been one that did not have some defect, which grew with time and became the reason for its ruin.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid., pp. 111–2: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Quando Aristotile diffinisce la vita beata, dice quella essere secondo la virtù non impedita, e essa virtù una certa laudabile mediocrità, che i viziosi estremi fugga... conseguentemente è necessario la perfetta vita della repubblica essere la mediocre, ma secondo quella mediocrità che i particolari possono acquistare.' See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford, 2009), 1106a25–1107a25.

⁹³ Lorenzo Valla, *Dialectical Disputations*, ed. B.P. Copenhaver and L. Nauta (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 2012), i, 1.10. On Valla's criticism of Aristotle, see L. Nauta, *In Defense of Common Sense. Lorenzo Valla's Humanist Critique of Scholastic Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009).

⁹⁴ Pontano, *De fortitudine* in *Opera omnia*, i, 1.4: 'Ex quo fit ut nec rerum, nec mensurae ratione habita, nunc exsuperante animo, nunc rursus deficiente, proprium virtutis munus implere nequeamus. Nec vero audiendi sunt qui adversus haec disserere coeperunt, minuti philosophi, aut potius nullo modo philosophi, qui mihi illud sane velle suadere videntur, ut de hominum actionibus tollatur mensura, ea videlicet, sine qua ne artifices quidem consummatum facere aliquid valeant.' Cf. Giovanni Pontano, *Actius* in *I dialoghi*, ed. C. Previtera (Florence, 1943), p. 146, where Pontano has the character 'Iacopo Sannazaro' reconsider the concept of virtue as a mean. An English translation of this dialogue is forthcoming in the I Tatti Renaissance Library Series of Harvard University Press.

⁹⁵ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 100: '*M. Giangiorgio*. ... Ma che bisogna di ciò maravigliarsi, sempre è accaduto che le repubbliche, o per essere male di prima institute, o per essersi col tempo, per la malvagità de' loro cittadini, corrotte, sieno mancate d'essere repubbliche, o del tutto disfatte avvenga che nessuna ne sia stata infino a' nostri tempi che in sè non abbia avuto qualche difetto, il quale crescendo in qualche tempo, è stato causa della sua rovina...'

Not only was the Florentine exile concerned with the essential conditions of a well-ordered republic, he took heed also of the causes of sedition – the corrupting elements of a republic. ‘Of sedition, dearest friends, many are the causes,’ declares Trissino. ‘Most of them arise when the government of a city moves away from that mean... and seditions are often primarily caused for the sake of honour and profit’.⁹⁶ These and other words are paraphrased from Book 5 of the *Politics* and slowly draw the dialogue to a close.

Just as one door closes on the *Politics* in Brucioli’s *Dialogi* another opens. Aristotle’s ensuing distinction in Book 5 of the *Politics* between kingship and tyranny and the methods whereby tyrannies are preserved are picked up by Brucioli a few dialogues later, in the *Dialogo della tirannide*. By broaching this subject Brucioli was engaging in a tradition of talking about tyranny that found full expression in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance with the writings of Bartolus of Sassoferrato (1313–57), Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), and Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98).⁹⁷ ‘The vast majority [of tyrannies] tend to come about because of new constitutions and changes brought about by the people,’⁹⁸ argues the character Geronimo Quirino (1469–1554), Patriarch of Venice, author of an invective against tyrants according to Brucioli, and recipient of Brucioli’s Italian translation of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* of 1538.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 143: ‘*M. Giangiorgio*. Della sedizione, amici carissimi, molte sono le cause, buona parte delle quali nasce quando il governo si parte da quella mediocrità, e da fuggirle per tutti i modi, a volere che la repubblica sia salva. E principalmente per l’onore e pel guadagno sono spesso causate le sedizioni.’ I should remark here that, though his edition of the *Dialogi* is very good, Landi seems to have run out of steam half-way through this dialogue and failed to draw several references to passages from Aristotle’s *Politics*. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1306b22–1307b25.

⁹⁷ See Bartolus, *De tyranno* in D. Quaglioni, *Politica e diritto nel Trecento italiano. Il De tyranno di Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1314–1457)* (Florence, 1983), pp. 175–213; Coluccio Salutati *De tyranno* in *Il Trattato ‘De Tyranno’ e lettere scelte*, ed. F. Ercole (Bologna, 1942); Girolamo Savonarola’s *Trattato del reggimento di Firenze* in *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, ed. L. Firpo (Rome, 1965), pp. 435–87. One should note here that Salutati’s tract was written in defence of Dante’s decision to damn Brutus and Cassius, Caesar’s assassins, to Hell, leaving them to be devoured by Lucifer in *The Divine Comedy, Inferno*, 34.55–69. On Salutati’s *De tyranno*, see R.G. Witt, ‘The *De Tyranno* and Coluccio Salutati’s View of Politics and Roman History’, *Nuova rivista storica*, 53 (1969), pp. 434–74, p. 441.

⁹⁸ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 263: ‘*M. Ieronimo*. ... la maggiore parte de’ tiranni sogliono pigliare l’origine loro dalle nuove costituzioni e aggiramenti del popolo.’

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 262–3: ‘*M. Domenico*. Molto bella fu, messer Ieronimo, quella vostra orazione, o invettiva che io dica, contro a’ tiranni, la quale ci leggesti questa mattina e molto piacque a ciascuno che la udì, e massimamente al nostro messer Piero.’ Curiously, there is no mention of this invective anywhere else in Renaissance literature. Moreover, the fact that Brucioli, a suspected Protestant, had a good relationship with Querini, a rather strict Dominican, is intriguing. For Brucioli’s dedicatory letter to Quirino, see Brucioli, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Venice, 1542), pp. 3–6.

M. Ieronimo. The tyrant follows what he pleases and, on contrary, the king follows what is right and honest. And the aim of the tyrant is to appropriate the wealth of the citizens, and the aim of the king is the honour of esteemed virtue. The tyrant rules by way of fear, treachery, and bad deeds, and the king by way of wisdom, integrity, and kindness. The tyrant rules for his own sake, and the king for the sake of the republic. The tyrant (as you can see all the time) looks after his safety by way of a barbaric multitude of soldiers, or rather mercenaries, whereas the king thinks himself safe thanks to his kindness and gratitude towards his citizens and their benevolence towards him.¹⁰⁰

Quirino goes on to abridge Aristotle's relevant pages into one. Disarmament, ostracism, murder, exile, gossip, and, worst of all, closing down of schools; these are the tricks of the tyrannical trade. The tyrant's aims are essentially three: first, to 'diminish the soul of the citizens by debasing them and by striving to make them ignorant and abject...'; second, to find a way to make 'citizens suspicious of each other'; and third, to reduce powerful citizens to paupers.¹⁰¹ But rather than ending here with Aristotle, Brucioli turns his attention to Xenophon's *Hiero* and the ostensible happiness of the tyrant before wrapping up the dialogue.¹⁰²

The smooth transition from Aristotle to Xenophon in the closing pages of the *Dialogo della tirannide* takes little away from the strong Aristotelian complexion of these three political dialogues in general. That Brucioli elects Aristotle as his primary source is evident. The same must be said for the *Dialogo della repubblica*. The *Dialogo del governo della famiglia* (*Dialogue on the*

¹⁰⁰ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 266: '*M. Ieronimo*. Che il tiranno si propone di seguitare ciò che nell'animo gli piace, e il re per contrario solamente quello che è retto e onesto. E il premio del tiranno sono le ricchezze de' cittadini, e del re l'onore della laudata virtù. Il tiranno amministra per paura e per inganno e per cattive operazioni, e il re per sapienza, integrità e beneficenza. Il tiranno a sua utilità domina, e il re a utilità della repubblica regge. Il tiranno (come voi potete tutto il giorno vedere) con una barbarica moltitudine di soldati, o più tosto latroni, guarda la salute del corpo suo, e il re con la beneficenza e gratitudine verso de' cittadini, e con la benevolenza di quegli verso di lui, pensa d'essere sicuro.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1279b5–10.

¹⁰¹ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 270: '*M. Ieronimo*. Molti certo [sono adunque i modi per li quali si salva il tiranno], ma tutti in tre si possono ridurre, perché tutti tendono a questi tre, l'uno de' quali è che il tiranno diminuisca gli animi de' cittadini avvilendogli e sforzandosi che sieno ignoranti e abietti, perché nessuno di picciolo e rimesso animo si leva contra il tiranno. Il secondo è di fare in modo che renda i cittadini fra sé diffidenti, perché non si tenta mai di levare via il tiranno se alcuni de' cittadini non si hanno fede tra loro, e per questo perseguita i buoni come avversari della sua dominazione, non solamente perché con difficoltà si assuefanno a vivere in servitù, ma ancora perché si hanno fede tra loro e dagli altri molta ne è avuta a quegli, né manifestano mai quello che si vogliano fare o a lui o a altri. Il terzo è che rende quegli potenti col fargli divenire poveri, sapendo che nessuno si mette a fare quelle cose che pensa che gli sieno impossibili, e che non si dissolverà la tirannide mancando i sudditi di potenza.' Aristotle, *Politics*, 1313a24–1314a29.

¹⁰² On Xenophon's *Hiero* in the Renaissance, see B.J. Maxson, 'Kings and Tyrants: Leonardo Bruni's Translation of Xenophon's *Hiero*', *Renaissance Studies*, 24 (2009), pp. 188–206.

Government of the Family) is in essence an abridgement of the *Oeconomics*, translated by Bruni in 1420.¹⁰³ Both the *Dialogo del modo dello instruire i figliuoli* (*Dialogue on How to Bring Up Children*) and *Dialogo delle leggi della repubblica* paraphrased Books 7 and 8 of the *Politics*.¹⁰⁴

IV. ROMAN LIBERTY AND GREEK POLITICAL THEORY

The intrusion of other sources in the *Dialogi* raises questions about the nature and role of Aristotle in Brucioli's *pensée* and, by extension, the conversations of the Rucellai Gardens more generally. Writing to Ottaviano de' Medici (1482–1546) in the preface of the *Dialogi* of 1544–5, Brucioli remarked that 'the family of the Medici has no doubt been great and illustrious, but do not believe that such great renown and fame did not benefit quite a bit from the Marsili Ficini, the Angeli Poliziani, the Pontani, the Platini and other similar writers who dedicated their work to them, enlarging and magnifying the magnanimity and liberality of these many illustrious men'.¹⁰⁵ More than a mere justification for sending his work to Ottaviano, his words were a chance to showcase his familiarity with the work of fellow *literati*.

The *Dialogi*'s eclecticism is obvious from the very start.¹⁰⁶ In the *Dialogo della condizione dell'uomo* (*Dialogue on Man's Condition*) Brucioli draws ideas from Pliny's *Historia naturalis* (*Natural History*), Plutarch's *De educatione puerorum* (*On the Education of Children*), Seneca's letters and *De breuitate vitae* (*On the Shortness of Life*), Cicero's *De legibus* (*On Laws*) and *De senectute* (*On Old Age*), Lucretius' *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*), and Epictetus' *Dissertationes* (*Dissertations*), as well as Machiavelli's *L'asino d'oro* (*The Golden Ass*) of 1517 and Petrarch's (1304–74) *Canzoniere* (*Song Book*) of 1328–64. The *Dialogo del matrimonio* (*Dialogue on Marriage*) is a potpourri of Biblical

¹⁰³ On Bruni's version of the *Oeconomica*, see J. Soudek, 'Leonardo Bruni and His Public: A Statistical and Interpretative Study of His Annotated Latin Version of the (Pseudo) Aristotelian Economics', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 5 (1968), pp. 49–136.

¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, due to the word-limit, it is impossible for me to discuss the Aristotelian complexion of these dialogues in any great detail. See, however, Landi's footnotes to the dialogues.

¹⁰⁵ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 10: 'Grande è stata certo e illustrissima la famiglia de' Medeci, ma non pensate che a sì alto grido e fama sua non giovassino assai i Marsili Ficini, gli Angeli Poliziano, i Pontani, i Platini e più altri simili scrittori che a quegli dedicarono l'opere loro, innalzando e magnificando la magnanimità e liberalità di tanti illustri uomini.'

¹⁰⁶ This eclecticism was first asserted by Landi in his article, G. Landi, 'Due lettere inedite di Antonio Brucioli a Carlo Carafa', *Pensiero politico*, 12 (1979), pp. 432–8, p. 433.

and Augustinian references, topped with allusions to Leon Battista Alberti's (1404–72) *I libri della famiglia* (*Books on the Family*) of 1433–40 and Erasmus' (1466–1536) *Moriae encomion* (*In Praise of Folly*) of 1511 and *De pueris instituendis* (*On the Education of Children*) of 1529, as well as classical sources, such as Plato's *Laws* and *Symposium*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* and Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Epictetus' *Enchiridion*, and Valerius Maximus' *Facta et dicta memorabilia* (*Famous Deeds and Sayings*). Aristotle hardly appears in either the first, second, or even third dialogue, the *Dialogo dello ufficio della moglie* (*Dialogue on the Office of the Wife*), which rests mainly on Erasmus' *Colloquia familiaria* (*Familiar Colloquies*) of 1518.

If, on the one hand, Brucioli seems to follow Aristotle closely in his political dialogues, on the other, neo-Roman ideas weigh in them too.¹⁰⁷ They are not just subsumed to Aristotle's political thought, at times they replace it. In the *Dialogo della repubblica*, the character Machiavelli rejects with deliberate irony Machiavelli's actual position. Machiavelli's republican ideas and words are in fact presented almost *verbatim* by Trissino, an imperialist and Brucioli's voice in the dialogue.¹⁰⁸ The irony is intentional, but it does not detract from the changes Brucioli brings about in an otherwise strictly Aristotelian thesis. In the middle of the dialogue the character Machiavelli defends Venice's isolationism, while Trissino, who in real life was forced into exile from Vicenza after it fell back into Venetian hands, rejects it outright.

Niccolò. I wanted to say that in order to establish and form a republic whose government lasts long it is necessary that it both be located in a good location, so much so that no one would think to able to take it over in a jiff, and must not care to expand its borders so much so that it would begin to threaten the nearby cities... For there are two reasons why war is waged against a city... Either in order to become a lord over it, or for fear that in growing it takes over others' cities.

M. Giangiorgio. No doubt, I believe that if, as you say, it were possible to keep things forever as they are, this would be the real political life and peace of a city. But given that all creations, not just man-

¹⁰⁷ On the relationship between Brucioli and Machiavelli see the classic contributions of Giuliano Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome, 1965), pp. 27–43 and C. Dionisotti, *Machiavellerie* (Turin, 1980), pp. 193–226, although both these studies are outclassed by Denis Fachard's 'Entre utopie et réalité: Antonio Brucioli et la leçon machiavélique' in E. Boillet (ed.), *Antonio Brucioli. Humanisme et évangélisme entre réforme et contre-réforme* (Paris, 2008), pp. 77–97.

¹⁰⁸ On Trissino's imperialism, see Gian Giorgio Tissino, *L'Italia liberata dai Goti: contributo alla storia dell'epopea italiana*, ed. F. Ermini (Rome, 1895).

made ones, are in motion, and cannot remain the same... it is therefore impossible that a republic sort itself out in such a way that it may neither grow nor shrink and survive, avoiding war with its neighbours, or civil discords, or corruption which leads it to indolence...¹⁰⁹

With this rhetorical inversion Brucioli was, of course, poking fun at Machiavelli and his Rucellai Gardens friends. He was also, however, highlighting the distinction between the Aristotelian and the Machiavellian conception of *vivere politico* (political life) and siding with the latter. This is not to say that Aristotle's position was not respected. On the contrary, it suggests that it was seriously contemplated in the Rucellai Gardens. But while Aristotelian political theory was the subject of serious debate, it was far from the straightjacket that one might be led to believe. Just as Platonism never formed the sole prism of concern in the first phase of the Rucellai meetings, so Aristotle never formed the sole prism of concern in the second phase.

Brucioli's stance on citizenship and warfare further betrays his neo-Roman ideology. The character Machiavelli, contrary to Machiavelli's actual beliefs, voices support for limiting citizenship and the public access to arms.

Niccolò. ... to none of the foreigners or subjects or inhabitants do they [the Venetians] give a chance to come to power, which remains in the hands of the same number of houses that they established in ancient times, not caring to increase their number. Nor, for this reason, would their decision of not arming themselves or the people and subjects be considered anything but good, so that given the strength that mercenaries quickly bring, it does not follow that some evil might disturb their

¹⁰⁹ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, pp. 118–9: '*Niccolò*. Io volevo dire che a costituire e formare una repubblica che fussi durabile nel suo reggimento bisognava che la fusse locata in luogo forte, talmente che nessuno credessi in un subito poterla opprimere, né si curare di poi di ampliare in tanta grandezza che la cominci a essere formidabile alle città vicine... Perché due sono le cause per le quali si fa guerra a una città... O per farsene signore, o per la paura che si ha di quella, che ampliando non occupi quelle di altri. *M. Giangiorgio*. Senza dubbio io penso che se, così come voi fate, si potessi sempre mantenere le cose di pari, che questo sarebbe il vero vivere politico e la vera quiete d'una città. Ma essendo tutte le cose create, non che quelle degli uomini solamente, in moto, e non potendo stare sempre in uno termine, è necessario che le republiche come l'altre cose principino, creschino e scemino, salghino e ascendino... E così è impossibile che una repubblica, appunto in modo si ordini e stabilisca che né accrescere né diminuire si possa e mantenere il suo stato, fuggendo la guerra de' popoli vicini, o le discordie civili, o la corruzione che seco apporta l'ozio...' Cf. Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, 1.6.

liberty, either because of the fear of other *potentati* [rulers], that they might grow to their disadvantage, or because of the ambition of commanders and insolence of the militia men.¹¹⁰

At issue here is the idea of a citizen-militia. A far cry from Machiavelli's own ideas, best evidenced in *On the Art of War*, these views of Venice as a paragon of military and civic strength struck a much stronger chord with, say, Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) and his eulogy of Venice as a *città disarmata* (unarmed city) in his *Dialogo sul reggimento di Firenze* (*Dialogue on the Government of Florence*) of 1522.¹¹¹ Brucioli's response is not long in coming and aligns itself beautifully not just with Bruni's *De militia* (*On the Militia*) of 1420 or Machiavelli's *On the Art of War*, but with the writings of Flavio Biondo (1392–1463), Roberto Valturio (1405–75), Francesco Patrizi of Siena (1413–94), Orso Orsini (*d.* 1470), and Domenico Cecchi (1447–1531) too.¹¹²

M. Giangiorgio. ... it is far more necessary in the republic that there be a militia than good laws, given that it is by way of the militia that a civil society can guard and keep itself and grow... A republic will fight against neighbouring people if need be or guard its liberty much better with its own citizens than with a foreign army that is moved by money. They will command their citizens much

¹¹⁰ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, pp. 118–9: 'Niccolò. ... E per questo modo facendo, benissimo sarebbe costituito in quello, che in questi nostri tempi è in alcuna repubblica, che a nessuno de' forestieri o de' sudditi o di quegli che abitano la loro città, danno l'adito a venire del loro governo, restandosi in quel numero di case che anticamente statuirono che avessi a governare la città e lo stato, non si curando di accrescerle in maggiore quantità. Né ancora sarebbe per questa medesima causa se non buona la loro opinione di non armare loro né il loro popolo e sudditi, acciò che per la grandezza che seco apportano le venditrici armi, non ne conseguino qualche cattivo sinistro che turbi la loro libertà, causato o dal timore degli altri potentati, temendo che tale potenza non cresca in loro danno, o dalla ambizione de' capitani e insolenza de' militi.'

¹¹¹ Francesco Guicciardini, *Dialogo e discorsi del reggimento di Firenze*, ed. R. Palmarocchi (Bari, 1932), p. 106: 'A me pare che el governo viniziano per una città disarmata sia così bello come forse mai avessi alcuna república libera.' See J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 219–71 and, more generally, W.J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Ages of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley, Cal., 1964). Cf. for example Machiavelli, *Art of War*, ed. C. Lynch (Chicago, Ill., 2003), pp. 60–2. On Machiavelli's military thought, see M.L. Colish, 'Machiavelli's *Art of War*: A Reconsideration', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 51 (1998), pp. 1151–68; R. Black, 'Machiavelli and the Militia: New Thoughts', *Italian Studies*, 69 (2014), pp. 41–50.

¹¹² On the subject of the militia in the Renaissance see C.C. Bayley, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence: the De Militia of Leonardo Bruni* (Toronto, 1961). See also N. Stone Villani, 'Militia versus Mercenaries: The Pro-Militia Debate in Renaissance Political Thought' (M.Phil. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009).

better, and these will fight more fiercely and for longer, being moved by honour, love for one's country, children and homes, things that have no effect on foreigners.¹¹³

Even Aristotle had cast doubts in Book 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* on the effectiveness of mercenaries. 'Professional soldiers turn cowards... when the danger puts too great a strain on them and they are inferior in numbers and equipment; for they are the first to fly, while citizen-forces die at their posts, as in fact happened at the temple of Hermes'.¹¹⁴ But if the defence of the homeland is given to citizens (in its broadest sense), these cannot be excluded from its government. So Brucioli abandoned Aristotle's exclusivism for Machiavelli's integrationism, for 'those two laws that you [Machiavelli – the interlocutor in the dialogue] were praising a moment ago have no place in a well-ordered republic,' says Trissino.¹¹⁵

In other words, neo-Roman ideas were common to Brucioli's otherwise largely Greek story. The fierce defence of a citizen-militia and the resulting integrationism went hand-in-hand with Machiavelli's and Sallust's equation of republican liberty with the greatness of a free state outlined in *Bellum Catilinae* (*The War with Catiline*).¹¹⁶ Republican Rome acted as a

¹¹³ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 122: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Adunque motlo più necessario fia nella repubblica la milizia dalle leggi bene ordinata, essendo quella che tale società civile possa reggere e mantenere e accrescere, che la mercatura o altra cosa che aggiunge se le possa, come una minima parte di quella senza la quale potrebbe essere e reggersi, non altrimenti che uno uomo senza uno de' piccioli suoi membri, che nondimeno si potrà dire uomo, e vivere, il che senza l'anima non sarà... Che una repubblica molto meglio farà la guerra a' vicini popoli quando di bisogno ne fia, o guarderà la sua libertà con l'armi de' suoi propri cittadini, che con quelle de' forestieri per prezzo condotti, e molto meglio quelle amministreranno, e più fortemente e con maggior constanza combatteranno, stringendogli gli onori, l'amore della patria, de' figliuoli e delle proprie case, dove gli altri nessuna di queste cose tali muove.' See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 42–3 and 58–9.

¹¹⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1116b16–20.

¹¹⁵ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, pp. 119–20: '*M. Giangiorgio*. E così non aranno luogo in una bene ordinata repubblica quelle due costituzioni che poco fa laudavi, cioè che non si dia speranza a alcuno di ascendere alle dignità del suo governo, per la qual cosa si accrescessi l'amore del popolo e de' gli abitatori delle città, ogni volta che non si vedessino del tutto privi degli onori, ma qualche volta potere conseguire quegli, e così accrescersi il numero de' veri cittadini, onde ne ampliassi la repubblica; l'altra il non avere la milizia de' suoi proprii, per la quale si augumentassi e conservassi l'impero.' Both amendments of Brucioli to Aristotle's political theory are elegantly discussed in M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250–1600* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 205–10. Surprisingly though, Viroli makes no mention of Procacci's analysis in G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome, 1965), which he will have no doubt come across by way of Landi's edition to the *Dialogi*.

¹¹⁶ Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, ed. J.C. Wolfe (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), 7.3. On Sallust in Renaissance political thought, see B. Fontana, 'Sallust and the Politics of Machiavelli', *History of Political Thought*, 24 (2003), pp. 86–108, as well as P. Osmond, 'Sallust and Machiavelli: From Civic Humanism to Political Prudence', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 23 (1993), pp. 408–38 and 'Princeps Historiae Romanae: Sallust in Renaissance Political Thought', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 40 (1995), pp. 101–43.

model for Brucioli, who argued against Aristotle and the Venetian model held dear during the early meetings of the Rucellai Gardens, that ‘one ought to try, by love or force, to get those who live in neighbouring cities... to come live in yours, making them citizens’.¹¹⁷

Neo-Roman ideology, however, and in particular the idea of expansionism intrinsic to the republican idea of liberty was a ticking bomb. Sallust knew it, Machiavelli knew it, and Brucioli knew it too. Sallust explained why in one of the most evocative passages of *Bellum Catilinae*.

But when our country [Rome] had grown great through toil and the practice of justice, when great kings had been vanquished in war, savage tribes and mighty peoples subdued by force of arms, when Carthage, the rival of Rome’s sway, had perished root and branch, and all seas and lands were open, then Fortune began to grow cruel and to bring confusion into all our affairs. Those who had found it easy to bear hardship and danger, anxiety and adversity, found leisure and wealth, desirable under other circumstances, a burden and a curse. Hence the lust for money first, then for power, grew upon them; these were, I may say, the root of all evil. For avarice destroyed honour, integrity, and all other noble qualities; taught in their place insolence, cruelty, to neglect the gods, to set a price on everything. Ambition drove many men to become false; to have one thought locked in the breast, another ready on the tongue; to value friendships and enmities not on their merits but by the standard of self-interest, and to show a good front rather than a good heart. At first these vices grew slowly, from time to time they were punished; finally, when the disease had spread like a deadly plague, the state was changed and a government second to none in equity and excellence became cruel.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Brucioli, *Dialogo*, pp. 142–3: ‘M. Giangiorgio. Anzi vi dico di più, che con l’esempio di Roma si dovrebbe cercare, o per amore o per forza, che quegli delle circumvicine città che non fussino discosto più di cinquanta miglia, venessino a abitare nella tua, facendone partecipi della cittadinanza, essendo la grandezza delle repubbliche il gran numero de’ cittadini e del popolo, e l’essere amate da’ sudditi, il che non conseguirà mai alcuna repubblica che levi la speranza de’ gli onori del governo, e non tanto non sarà amata da’ sudditi, ma e da quegli e da’ popolani non cittadini sarà grandemente odiata, né mai potrà crescere, o abbia o non abbia l’armi proprie.’

¹¹⁸ Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, 10.1–6: ‘Sed ubi labore atque iustitia res publica crevit, reges magni bello domiti, nationes ferae et populi ingentes vi subacti, Carthago aemula imperi Romani ab stirpe interiit, cuncta maria terraeque patebant, saevire fortuna ac miscere omnia coepit. Qui labores, pericula, dubias atque asperas res facile tolerabant, eis otium, divitiae, optanda alias, oneri miseriaeque fuere. Igitur primo pecuniae, deinde imperi cupido crevit; ea quasi materies omnium malorum fuere. Namque avaritia fidem, probitatem ceterasque artis bonas subvortit; pro his superbiam, crudelitatem, deos neglegere, omnia venalia habere edocuit. Ambitio multos mortalis falsos fieri subegit, aliud clausum in pectore aliud in lingua promptum habere, amicitias inimicitiasque non ex re sed ex commodo aestumare magisque voltum quam ingenium bonum habere. Haec primo paulatim crescere, interdum vindicari; post, ubi contagio quasi pestilentia invasit, civitas immutata, imperium ex iustissimo atque optimo crudele intolerandumque factum.’

Machiavelli had underlined the problem of neo-Roman liberty in the *Discourses on Livy* when he argued that the Roman quest for *grandezza* (greatness) was also a sine qua non of its *libertas* (liberty), which produced a deadlock since expansion eventually leads to decline and decline to the loss of liberty.¹¹⁹ To be sure, the battle of Agnadello in 1509 and Venice's subsequent loss of land and liberty stood as testament to the dangers of the Greek schema too, even though the loss lasted only a very short time.¹²⁰ Yet it is with the problem of neo-Roman liberty that Brucioli is concerned in his dialogue. One, then, should not be surprised that the character Machiavelli should recommend to Trissino that they talk about sedition as soon as he has finished vindicating the Roman view.¹²¹

But when Brucioli through Trissino does move on to the subject of sedition as a result of the problem of neo-Roman liberty, he does not turn to Roman sources but rather to Book 5 of the *Politics*, Aristotle's analysis of the dissolution of constitutions providing the antidote to the venomous side-effects of his neo-Roman ideology. 'Profit and honour are the main causes of seditions' for Aristotle as for Brucioli.¹²² 'Seditions', Brucioli says following Aristotle, 'also emerge when someone in the city has too much power.'¹²³ Ostracism, of course, may be used to remove them, as exemplified by Athens and Argos in the *Politics* and the *Dialogi*.¹²⁴ 'But', in both Aristotle's and Brucioli's words, 'it would have been better to organise things in the first place so that there would not have been such a pre-eminent man in the city to deal with'.¹²⁵ To be sure, some seditions, Aristotle and Brucioli warn, seem small in the beginning and then

¹¹⁹ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 1.6. See D. Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 125–45 and M. Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 38–75. Cf. Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 3.24, where he blames the loss of liberty on the Agrarian Laws and the prolongation of military commands.

¹²⁰ Machiavelli, *Legazione e commissarie*, ed. S. Bertelli (3 vols., Milan, 1964), iii, pp. 1188–1205. See also F. Gilbert, 'Machiavelli e Venezia', *Lettere Italiane*, 21 (1969), pp. 389–98.

¹²¹ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 143: 'Niccolò. Parrebbevegli che fusse da dire alcuna cosa delle sedizioni che accaggiono nella repubblica, acciò che conosciute si possano meglio schifare.'

¹²² Ibid., p. 143: 'M. Giangiorgio. E principalmente per l'honore, et pel guadagno sono spesso causate le seditioni.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1302a15–b5.

¹²³ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 143: 'M. Giangiorgio. ... Nasce anchora la seditione, quando alcuno ha gran possanza nella citta, come nel favore del popolo, o de clienti, o degli amici.'

¹²⁴ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 143: 'Priore. Ei si potrieno simili huomini grandi mandare in esilio come era gia consueto in Argo, et in Athene.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1302b17–18.

¹²⁵ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 144: 'M. Giangiorgio. Questo era certamente bene fatto, ma meglio sarebbe stato havere ordinato da principio, che nessuno fosse nella citta che tanto eccedessi, che dipoi si havesse à cercare di rimedio alla sua grandezza.' Aristotle, *Politics*, 1302b18–20.

become very serious.¹²⁶ So the character Salviati asks Trissino in Brucioli's dialogue how to avoid them. The answer, once again, lies with Aristotle and 'making sure (with the utmost diligence) that no one breaks the law, even in small matters, for transgression creeps in unperceived because of its small size and then, step by step, if unrectified, corrupts the whole republic.'¹²⁷ Republics, according Aristotle and Brucioli, should never wrong the ambitious in matters of honour.¹²⁸ Moreover, 'since men who are afraid tend to be more watchful over the republic, it is often necessary for those who want the republic to be safe to prepare or fabricate threats towards their city so that it does not become corrupt as a result of laziness'.¹²⁹ Honours, for Brucioli as for Aristotle, should not be piled on all at once but spread over a long period of time.¹³⁰ But honours which are given all at once should not be taken away in the same way but rather one by one.¹³¹ Every state, for Aristotle as for Brucioli, should be administered so that magistrates cannot possibly make money.¹³² Sedition, for Aristotle as for Brucioli, is often the child of corruption. In democracies, however, the rich ought to be spared

¹²⁶ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 144: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Sono alcune seditioni, che sembrano picciole nel principio, et poi divengono gravissime, à poco, à poco, causate da picciole dissensionì di cittadini, come antiquamente intervenne alla città di Pistoia.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1303a22–25.

¹²⁷ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 144: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Osservando (con somma diligentia) che non si faccia alcuna trasgressione delle leggi, in alcuna cosa, benché picciola, perché egli accade alcuna volta, che uno picciolo prevaricamento sta occulto per essere picciolo, et à poco, à poco, se non è corretto, ne fa uno grande, il quale del tutto corrompe la repubblica.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1307b30–40.

¹²⁸ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 145: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Conservasi anchora non meno, e sicura si tiene la repubblica col governarsi rettamente, tanto verso quegli che sono fuori del governo di quella, quanto verso quegli che la possono amministrare, non facendo ingiuria alcuna à quegli, che non sono partecipi del governo, e col ricevere ogni anno alcuno de loro maggiori, non deprimendo quegli, che sono cupidi di honore, et non privando la moltitudine de suoi commodi.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1308a2–20.

¹²⁹ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 145: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Perché gli huomini che temono, più vigilantemente attendono alla custodia della repubblica. E per questo è sovente di bisogno, che quegli, che vogliono la repubblica salva, preparino, ò fingano alcuni sospetti soprastare alla città, accio che non si corrompino per le delitie, che seco apporta la sicurtà, di quelle cose, che risguardano alla Repubblica.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1308a25–35.

¹³⁰ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 145: '*M. Giangiorgio*. E sono anchora, per ispegnere del tutto le seditioni, più presto da darsi i piccioli honori per lungo tempo, che i grandi spesso, e per breve, et la ragione di questo è, che gl'ingegni per simili eccellentie si corrompono più facilmente, che con le ignominie, ne ciascuno si può così bene reggere, et governare nella prospera fortuna, come nell'avversa.' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1308a10–15.

¹³¹ Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 146: '*Priore*. E se alcuna volta accade... che si sieno dati molti honori à uno, che quello non si sappia poi reggere, che fia da fare, per emenda di questo errore? Accioche in peggio non trascorra? *M. Giangiorgio*. Non sono certamente (se si debba confessare il vero) da levargli subito tutti, ma bene à poco à poco, adolcendo la piaga...' See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1308a15–20.

¹³² Brucioli, *Dialogi*, p. 146: '*M. Giangiorgio*. Nella quale città, in qualunque modo ella sia, è da vedere con grandissima diligentia, per la sua salvatione, che i magistrati non si prendano per guadagnarne...' Aristotle, *Politics*, 1308b32–1309a31.

and their property left whole and safeguarded. And on this note Brucioli ends his discussion of the means of preserving the republic.

V. CONCLUSION

Brucioli's dialogue highlights the centrality of Aristotle's analysis of the means of preserving the state to republican ideology. There is no doubt that the ideas shared by the later members of the Rucellai Gardens were largely born out of Roman Law and the writings of Cicero, Seneca, Sallust, and Tacitus. Brucioli's thought, however, draws our attention to the synergy of neo-Roman and Aristotelian ideas in the Renaissance. The volatile context of sixteenth-century Florence and the fragility of neo-Roman liberty coupled with a rejection of the naïve optimism of Plato's or More's utopianism forced republican writers to eventually come to terms with the problem of the dissolution of constitutions. More's *Utopia* overcame the impasse of neo-Roman political theory by rejecting the idea of *virtus* (virtue) and *iustitia* (justice), *gloria* (glory) through *grandezza*, and the importance of *libertas*, opting for Greek values instead. The objective for More was happiness, not glory and justice. *Eleutheria* (freedom) rested on reason and virtue. Thus, *dikaion* (justice), far from being an imperative to respect the *ius* (right) of every individual and safeguard his or her *libertas*, ensured the rule of the wisest and most virtuous. As 'Hythloday' reveals, this different set of values allowed More not just to follow Plato in constructing an ideal state, the *optima forma reipublicae* (the best constitution).¹³³ The Platonic rejection of private property granted his *Utopia* everlasting life. Utopians, 'have adopted such institutions of life as have laid the foundations of the commonwealth not only most happily,' Hythloday relates, 'but also to last forever, as far as human prescience can forecast'.¹³⁴ For More, as for Ficino, 'Plato was humanity's Phoebean physician'. He had

¹³³ Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. G. M. Logan *et al.* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 241.

¹³⁴ More, *Utopia*, 245. See E. Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 19–48. Nelson draws attention the fact that even Pontano's *De obedientia* offered a defence of the Roman theory of justice.

discerned the cause of mankind's affliction, that is private property, and sought to remove it and therefore secure stability.¹³⁵ Not even Plato thought a utopia would last forever.¹³⁶ No one in the Rucellai Gardens shared More's illusion of an everlasting republic. To do so would have been an act of folly.¹³⁷ There were no *Graeculi* (baby Greeks) among them. All, essentially, adhered to the neo-Roman view. This left them, though, with a Gordian knot, which they sought to cut with another Greek sword, Aristotle. Like all the members of the philosophical family living in the noble castle of Canto 4 of Dante's *Inferno* (*Hell*), they turned to *l maestro di color che sanno* (the master of those who know), that is Aristotle and his analysis of the dissolution of constitutions, Pontano being the Charon who first ferried Aristotelian ideas across the Lethe and into their garden.

¹³⁵ Marsilio Ficino, *Opera omnia* (Venice, 1581), fol. 238v: 'Plato igitur phoebeus humani generis medicus... Cognoscens ergo genus humanum per leges distribuentes propria tot saeculi nihil proficere, immo vero in deterius quotidie labi non iniuria ad amicitiae se transtulit leges communia inter amicos omnia fore iubentes: ut divisione divisionisque et miseriae sublata causa, concordiam, unionem, felicitatem consequeremur.'

¹³⁶ See Plato, *Republic*, 546A–547A: 'seeing that everything which has a beginning has also an end, even a constitution such as yours will not last for ever, but will in time be dissolved.'

¹³⁷ I here refer to Erasmus's pun in *Moriae encomium* in *Opera omnia*, ed. C.H. Miller (Amsterdam, 1979) iv, t. 3, p. 68: 'Mori cognomen tibi gentile, quod tam ad Moriae vocabulum accedit, quam es ipse a re alienus.'

6

Aristotle's Political Thought in the Renaissance

Vernacular Commentaries

I. ARISTOTLE AND THE VOLGARE

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they [the families of the sons of Noah] journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Genesis.ii.1–9.

Babelism reigned before the Renaissance. ‘Italy alone,’ Dante (1265–1351) wrote in his *De vulgari eloquentia* (*On Eloquence in the Vernacular*) of 1304, ‘presents a range of at least fourteen different vernaculars. All these vernaculars also vary internally, so that the Tuscan of Siena is distinguished from that of Arezzo, or the Lombard of Ferrara from that of Piacenza’. Variations existed even within single cities. ‘For this reason,’ Dante continues, ‘if we wished to calculate the number of primary, and secondary, and still further subordinate varieties of the

Italian vernacular, we would find that, even in this tiny corner of the world [Italy], the count would take us not only to a thousand different types of speech, but well beyond that figure.¹

Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* was the first attempt to create or identify a standard uniform Italian language out of the cacophony of different speeches found in the peninsula.

Since I find that no one, before myself, has dealt in any way with the theory of eloquence in the vernacular, and since we can plainly see that such eloquence is necessary to everyone – for not only men, but also women and children strive to acquire it, as far as nature allows – I shall try, inspired by the Word that comes from above, to say something useful about the language of people who speak the vulgar tongue, hoping thereby to enlighten somewhat the understanding of those who walk the streets like the blind, ever thinking that what lies ahead is behind them.²

The whole enterprise rested on the belief of the superiority of the vernacular over Latin. ‘Of these two kinds of language,’ he wrote, ‘the more noble is the vernacular: first, because it was the language originally used by the human race; second, because the whole world employs it, though with different pronunciations and using different words; and third, because it is natural to us, while the other [that is Latin] is, in contrast, artificial.’³

Dante underlined the nobility of the vernacular in his *Convivio* (*The Banquet*) of 1304–7 and *Divine Comedy* of 1308–20. In the *Convivio* he first apologised for the use of the vernacular. ‘Excellent should be the excuse if at a banquet so noble in its viands, so honoured in its guests, were served oaten instead of wheat bread’. He then explained his use of it by claiming he was compelled to reveal the vernacular’s true potential, pre-emptively safeguard it from other vulgarisations, and defend it from accusers. ‘I say that natural love especially impels the lover to three things: one is, to magnify the beloved; the second is, to be jealous for him; the third is,

¹ Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. S. Botterill (Cambridge, 1996), 1.10.7. On dialects in general, see C. Dionisotti, *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Turin, 1967). On language and the *De vulgari eloquentia*, see B. Nardi, ‘Il linguaggio’ in B. Nardi, *Dante e la cultura medievale* (Bari, 1942); G. Billanovich, ‘Nella tradizione del *De vulgari eloquentia*’ in G. Billanovich, *Prime ricerche dantesche* (Rome, 1947), pp. 13–19; B. Terracini, ‘Natura ed origine del linguaggio umano nel *De vulgari eloquentia*’ in B. Terracini, *Pagine e appunti di linguistica storica* (Florence, 1957); G. Vinay, ‘Ricerche sul *De vulgari eloquentia*’, *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 136 (1959), pp. 237–74, pp. 367–88; A. Schiaffini, *Interpretazione del ‘De vulgari eloquentia’ di Dante* (Rome, 1963); I. Baldelli, ‘Sulla teoria linguistica di Dante’, *Cultura e scuola*, 13–14 (1965), pp. 705–13; L. Peirone, *Il ‘De vulgari eloquentia’ e la linguistica moderna* (Genoa, 1975). I. Pagani, *La teoria linguistica di Dante* (Naples, 1982).

² Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, 1.1.1.

³ Ibid., 1.1.4.

to defend him, as any one may see continually happening.’⁴ But the *Convivio* was left unfinished as Dante moved on to an altogether more ambitious project, *The Divine Comedy*. *The Divine Comedy* ushered in a golden age of Italian literature and language. Petrarch’s (1304–74) *Canzoniere* (Songbook) of 1327–68, now known as *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (Fragments of Vernacular Matters), and Giovanni Boccaccio’s (1313–75) *Decamerone* (Decameron) of 1353 soon followed.⁵

The revival of classical literature in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries contributed not only to a *secolo senza poesia*, that is a century of literary decline, but active resistance to the *vulgare*.⁶ The humanist and book-hunter Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437) famously exemplified this in his scathing attack on Italy’s three crowns, that is Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. ‘The first calls himself a poet, the second a poet laureate, and the third a prophet. Oh, poor men, how much fog blinds you! By Hercules, I would far prefer one of Cicero’s letters and one of Virgil’s poems to all your little books.’⁷ Niccoli was not alone. The humanists and scholars Romolo Amaseo (1489–1552) and Lazzaro Bonamico (1477–1552) later voiced strong opposition to the vulgar tide in their respective *De latinae linguae usu retinendo* (On Retaining the Use of Latin) of 1529 and *Concetti della lingua latina* (Concepts of the Latin Language) of 1562.⁸ Of course, Niccoli’s ideas were not shared universally. The Chancellor of Florence Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), for example, recanted Niccoli’s position and harshly criticised his bitter vitriol in his palinodial oration *In nebulonem maledicum* (Against That Slandereous Scoundrel) of 1424.⁹ It was in

⁴ Dante, *The Convivio*, ed. P.H. Wickstool (London, 1903), 1.10.

⁵ Z.G. Barański and M.L. McLaughlin (eds.), *Italy’s Three Crowns: Reading Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio* (Oxford, 2007).

⁶ B. Croce, ‘Il secolo senza poesia’, *La critica. Rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia*, 30 (1932), pp. 161–84.

⁷ Leonardo Bruni, *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum* in *Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. P. Viti (Turin, 1996), pp. 78–143, p. 114: ‘Itaque alter se poetam, alter se laureatum, alter se vatem appellat. Heu, miseros, quanta caligo obcecat! Ego mehercule unam Ciceronis epistolam atque unum Virgilii carmen omnibus vestris opusculis longissime antepono.’ Niccoli is one of the main interlocutors of Bruni’s dialogue. On humanist attitudes towards Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, see the texts collected and translated in D. Thompson and A.F. Nagel, *The Three Crowns of Florence: Humanist Assessments of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio* (London, 1972). On Bruni’s relationship with the vernacular see J. Hankins, ‘Humanism in the Vernacular: The Case of Leonardo Bruni’ in C.S. Celenza and K. Gouwens (ed.), *Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance: Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 11–29.

⁸ Amaseo’s oration is published in his *Orationum volumen* (Bologna, 1564), pp. 101–46. On Bonamico, see F. Piovan, *Per la biografia di Lazzaro Bonamico: ricerche sul periodo dell’insegnamento padovano (1530–1552)* (Trieste, 1988). On the Latin-vernacular debate in general, see S. Stever Gravelle, ‘The Latin-Vernacular Question and Humanist Theory of Language and Culture’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29 (1988), pp. 367–86.

⁹ Bruni, *Oratio in nebulonem maledicum* in *Opere*, pp. 338–70, p. 342: ‘Eo usque enim stultitiae vanitatisque processit ut invidet omnibus, quasi aliquo munere ipse sit, aut quasi comparari cum doctissimis queat.

Bruni's *Dialogum ad Petrum Paulum Histrum* (*Dialogue to Pier Paolo Vergerio*) of 1404–5 that Niccoli's attack was recorded.¹⁰ However, the polymath Leon Battista Alberti's (1404–72) failed *Certame coronario* of 1441, that is a vernacular poetry competition which failed to crown a winner, testified to the fact that Italian in the fifteenth century had yet to come out of a rut.¹¹

Yet, by the sixteenth century the ubiquity of the *volgare* in Renaissance literature was manifest, so much so that even Amaseo's oration against the vernacular looked more like a rhetorical exercise than an honest attempt to counter the trend.¹² Machiavelli's (1469–1527) *Discorso della nostra lingua* (*Discourse on Our Language*) of around 1524, Pietro Bembo's (1470–1547) *Prose della volgar lingua* (*Writings on the Vulgar Tongue*) of 1525, and Sperone Speroni's (1500–88) *Dialogo delle lingue* (*Dialogue on Languages*) of 1545 evinced a renewed interest in the *questione della lingua*, that is the question over which language to use across the Italian peninsula.¹³ The poet and literary scholar Giangiorgio Trissino (1478–1550), the main interlocutor of Antonio Brucioli's (1498–1566) *Dialogi della moral filosofia* (*Dialogues on Moral Philosophy*) of 1526–44, confirmed this when he rendered into Italian Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* in 1529. And, although Italian only became a *lingua franca*, that is a common language, after the Napoleonic era, by the *Seicento* one could begin noticing the eclipse of the

Ita demum vero opinionem quam cupit se obtinere posse existimat, si summorum virorum, qui litteris et doctrina et sapientia claruerunt, gloria omnis famaue ledatur; itaque bellum indixit scurra nepharius cunctis prestantibus ingenio viris, nec viventibus modo sed etiam mortuis. Nam et Dantem, optimum nobilissimumque poetam, vituperare assidue prope convicio non cessat, et de Petrarcha ita loquitur quasi de homine insulso et ignorantie pleno, Boccacium ita spernit ut ne tres quidem litteras scisse illum asseveret.⁷

¹⁰ Bruni, *Vite di Dante e Petrarca* in *Opere*, pp. 533–60. On Bruni's *Vite di Dante e di Petrarca*, see C.A. Madrignani, 'Di alcune biografie umanistiche di Dante e Petrarca', *Belfagor*, 18 (1963), pp. 29–48; C. Dionisotti, 'Dante nel Quattrocento' in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Danteschi* (2 vols., Florence), i, pp. 333–78; P. Trovato, 'Dai "Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum" alle "Vite di Dante e del Petrarca"'. Appunti su Leonardo Bruni e la tradizione trecentesca', *Studi petrarcheschi*, 2 (1985), pp. 263–84; L.G. Rosa, 'Leonardo Bruni e le sue "vite parallele" di Dante e del Petrarca', *Lettere Italiane*, 47 (1995), pp. 386–401.

¹¹ On the *Certame coronario*, see G. Gorni, 'Storia del Certame coronario', *Rinascimento*, 2nd series, 12 (1972), pp. 135–81; L. Bertolini, 'ΑΓΩΝ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΙΤΗΣ. Il progetto del Certame Coronario (e la sua ricezione)' in A. Calzona et al. (eds.), *Il volgare come lingua di cultura dal Trecento al Cinquecento* (Florence, 2003), pp. 51–70.

¹² On Amaseo's oration as a rhetorical exercise, see R.A. Hall, Jr., *The Italian Questione della Lingua. An Interpretative Essay* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1942), p. 4.

¹³ On the *questione della lingua*, see R.A. Hall, Jr., 'The Significance of the Italian "Questione della Lingua"', *Studies in Philology*, 39 (1942), pp. 1–10; C. Grayson, *A Renaissance Controversy: Latin or Italian? An Inaugural Lecture Delivered before the University of Oxford on 6 November 1959* (Oxford, 1960); A. Mazzocco, *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists: Studies of Language and Intellectual History in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy* (Leiden, 1993). The literature on the *questione della lingua* is vast. I have therefore chosen to give here just a few English titles of relevant works.

Latin language, at least in literary circles, with the publication of the *Vocabolario della Crusca* (*Dictionary of the Accademia della Crusca*) in 1612.

As Dante reveals in the *Convivio*, however, genuine and spurious Aristotelian philosophy had enjoyed vernacular translations in Italian long before the rise of the vernacular and the *questione della lingua*.¹⁴ In the thirteenth century, Taddeo Alderotti (1210–95) produced his *Etica* (*Ethics*), an Italian rendering of an Arabic pseudo-Aristotelian compendium put into Latin by Herman the German (*d.* 1272) in 1243–4. Alderotti's work achieved tremendous popularity in Italy, largely by way of Brunetto Latini's (1220–94) popular *Li livres dou trésor* (*The Book of Treasures*) of 1266, which was first written in langue d'oïl (the *romana lingua* spoken in parts of northern France, southern Belgium, and the Channel Islands between the ninth and fourteenth centuries) and then rendered into Italian.¹⁵ Similarly, Giles of Rome's (*d.* 1316) *De regimine principum* (*On the Rule of Princes*) of 1277, which incorporated elements of Aristotle's moral philosophy, was vulgarised in Old French by Henri de Gauchi in 1282 and then anonymously translated into Italian in 1288.¹⁶

France spearheaded the vulgarisation of Aristotle in the fourteenth century. To be sure, the Benedictine monk Notker of St Gall (*c.* 950–1022) had produced German translations of Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation* as early as the eleventh century. But it was only with Nicole Oresme's (1323–85) French versions of the *Ethics*, *Politics*, and *Oeconomics* of around 1369–77 produced at the behest of King Charles V (1338–80) that the

¹⁴ On vernacular translation in late medieval Italy, see A. Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (Cambridge, 2010).

¹⁵ On Alderotti's translation, see S. Gentili, 'L'*Etica* volgarizzata da Taddeo Alderotti (m. 1295): saggio di un commento', *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 17 (2006), pp. 249–81 and *L'uomo aristotelico alle origini della letteratura italiana* (Rome, 2005). On Herman the German or Hermannus Alemannus, see C. Burnett, 'Arabic into Latin: The Reception of Arabic Philosophy into Western Europe' in P. Adamson and R.C. Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 370–404. Latini's work incorporated some aspects of Alderotti's *Etica*. There has been much debate over who translated Latini's *Trésor*. Many point to Bono Giamboni (1240–1292). Cesare Segre argues differently in C. Segre, *Lingua, stile e società* (Milan, 1963), pp. 311–2. It is, however, widely agreed that Latini's claim to have translated the *Nicomachean Ethics* from the Latin into the Romance language is false. See, however, Brunetto Latini, *Li livres dou trésor*, ed. F.J. Carmody (Berkeley, Cal., 1948), p. 175: 'Mais tot avant volt il fonder son edifice sor le livre Aristotle, et si le translata de latin en romange, et le posera au commencement de la seconde partie de son livre.'

¹⁶ On the reception of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, see C.F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's 'De regimine principum': Reading and Writing at Court and University, c. 1275–c. 1525* (Cambridge, 1999).

vernacularisation of Aristotelian philosophy got well and truly underway.¹⁷ Italy did not lag far behind and was soon lit by a constellation of vernacular compendia, commentaries, paraphrases, and translations of the *Ethics*, starting with the Augustinian theologian Antonio Colombella's (d. 1466) *Ethica d'Aristotile* (*The Ethics of Aristotle*) of around 1430 and continuing by way of the historian Giovanni Cavalcanti's (1381–1450) *Trattato politico-morale* (*Moral and Political Treatise*) of around 1440, the anonymous *De la ingratitude e di molti esempi d'essa* (*On Ungratefulness and Many Examples of It*) of around 1440, the Ciceronian schoolmaster Bernardo Nuti's *Etica d'Aristotile tradotta* (*The Ethics of Aristotle Translated*) of around 1450, and Benedetto Morandi's (d. 1478) *De le morali virtute* (*On Moral Virtues*) of around 1470.¹⁸ The pseudo-Aristotelian *On Virtues and Vices* was translated by the Dominican Lazzaro Gallineta (d. 1490) in the mid-1460s.

Aristotle's political thought was rendered into Italian by the mid-sixteenth century. The first Italian vernacular translation of the *Politics* was Brucioli's *Gli otto libri della repubblica che chiamano la Politica di Aristotile* (*The Eight Books on the Republic also known as the Politics of Aristotle*) of 1547. This was soon followed by Bernardo Segni's (1504–58) *Trattato dei governi di Aristotile* (*Treatise on the Governments of Aristotle*) of 1549 as well as summaries, paraphrases, compendia of and treatises on Aristotelian political thought and moral philosophy more generally, such as Lodovico Dolce's (1508–68) *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele* (*Summary of the Philosophy of Aristotle*) of around 1565, Bartolomeo Cavalcanti's (1503–62) *Trattati ovvero discorsi* (*Treatises, That Is Discourses*) of 1570, Antonio Scaino's (1524–1612) *La politica di Aristotile ridotta in modo di parafrasi* (*The Politics of Aristotle Paraphrased*) of 1578, Giason Denores's (1530–90) *Breve institutione dell'ottima repubblica* (*Brief Discussion on The Perfect Republic*) of 1578 and *Discorso* (*Discourse*) of 1586, Felice Figliucci's (1518–95) *De la politica ovvero scienza civile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile* (*On Politics, That Is the Civil Science According to the Doctrine of Aristotle*) of 1583, Antonio Riccobono's (1541–99) *Parere sopra la Repubblica di Hippodamo nella Politica* (*Opinion on the Hippodamus' Republic in the*

¹⁷ On Nicole Oresme, see S. Lusignan, 'Nicole Oresme traducteur et la pensée de la langue française savant,' in P. Souffrin and A.P. Segonds (eds.), *Nicolas Oresme: tradition et innovation chez un intellectuel du XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1988), pp. 93–104 and C. Richter Sherman, *Imaging Aristotle: Verbal and Visual Representation in Fourteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, Cal., 1995), pp. 3–35.

¹⁸ See C. Marchesi, *L'Etica Nicomachea nella tradizione latina medievale* (Messina, 1904).

Politics) of 1586, Nikola Vitov Gučetić's (also known and henceforth referred to as Nicolò Vito di Gozzi) (1549–1610) *Dello stato delle repubbliche secondo la mente di Aristotele* (*On the State of Republics According to Aristotle*) of 1591, the anonymous *Compendio della Politica di Aristotele* (*Compendium of Aristotle's Politics*) of around 1598, Fabio Albergati's (1538–1606) *Discorsi politici* (*Political Discourses*) of 1602, Panfilo Persico's (d. 1625) *Della filosofia morale et politica d'Aristotele* of 1617, and Camillo Baldi's (1550–1637) *Ragionamenti sopra la Politica d'Aristotile* (*Thoughts on the Politics of Aristotle*) of 1633.¹⁹

Intellectual historians have long been aware of the vernacularisation of Aristotle in the Renaissance. Wiktor Wasik first drew attention to it in his seminal article *L'aristotélisme populaire comme fragment de la Renaissance* of 1935.²⁰ Yet, despite the massive surge of interest in the reception of Aristotle in the Renaissance between the 1950s and 80s, scholars have generally been oblivious to the vernacular dimension of Aristotle's thought in the Renaissance. Charles Schmitt was notoriously dismissive of it.²¹ Only in recent times has the tide turned, partly thanks to Luca Bianchi, but largely as a result of the joint Warburg and Warwick project on *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy*, as well as the Warwick and Ca' Foscari project on *Aristotle in the Italian Vernacular*.²² Eugenio Refini, as part of the Warburg and Warwick project, has unearthed a large body of Renaissance Aristotelian literature in the vernacular.²³ Yet, scholars still have to draw conclusions on Refini's findings, especially with regard to vernacularisations of Aristotle's political thought in the Renaissance.

¹⁹ All these titles in one way or another explicitly refer to Aristotle's political thought, either in the preface, text, or paratext.

²⁰ W. Wasik, 'L'aristotélisme populaire comme fragment de la Renaissance', *Revue d'histoire de la philosophie et d'histoire générale de la civilisation*, n.s., 9 (1935), pp. 33–66.

²¹ C.B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); E.F. Cranz and C.B. Schmitt, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions, 1501–1600* (Baden-Baden, 1984). There is no serious discussion of or exhaustive references to vernacular works on Aristotle in either of these works.

²² L. Bianchi, 'Per una storia dell'aristotelismo 'volgare' nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca', *Bruniana e Campanelliana*, 15 (2009), pp. 367–85. Information on the first project may be found in D. Lines, 'Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism: Bernardo Segni's *Ethica*, the Florentine Academy, and the Vernacular in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 66 (2013), pp. 824–65, pp. 824–7. Information on the second project may be found at <http://aristotleinthevernacular.org/> (accessed 7 October 2015).

²³ E. Refini, *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy, c. 1400–c. 1650* database at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/projects/vernaculararistotelianism/database/> (accessed 7 October 2015).

My intention in the rest of this chapter is to explore Renaissance vernacular commentaries and treatises on Aristotle's *Politics*, with a special emphasis on the three most revealing and original ones, namely Bernardo Segni's *Trattato dei governi*, Vito di Gozzi's *Dello stato delle repubbliche*, and Fabio Albergati's *Discorsi politici*. Historians of political thought have generally ignored Segni's version of the *Politics* except to note the parallel he draws between Machiavelli and Aristotle.²⁴ The few scholars who have examined his *Trattato dei governi* more carefully have regarded his translation as an expression of a literary movement rather than as a window into Renaissance political discourse.²⁵ My contention is that Segni wrote his *Trattato dei governi* less as a cultural act than as a political one. The letter he wrote to Cosimo I de' Medici (1519–74) that prefaces his translation reveals that he saw the *Politics* not as an irrelevant work of philosophy to be shelved and never to be opened again but rather as a useful manual of practical politics and a tool in the propaganda war raging in Florence. Vito di Gozzi's *Dello stato delle repubbliche* highlights attempts to relate Aristotle's thought to recent politics. While Albergati's *Discorsi* relates Aristotle's thought to contemporary political discourse. These and further considerations serve to reveal the continuing importance of Aristotle's political thought in the late Renaissance.

II. ARISTOTLE AND HIS VALUE

Born into an ancient family of Florentine merchants, Segni left Florence for Venice in 1526 and came into contact there with Alessandro Pazzi (1470–1535), the Florentine Ambassador to Venice in 1527, and Pazzi's friend Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (1456–1531), the Venetian scholar of Greek descent, who was lecturing on Aristotle in Padua at the time. He entered the

²⁴ On Segni's parallel between Aristotle and Machiavelli, see G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome, 1965), pp. 47–50. M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250–1600* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 245–6 illustrates Segni's neglect in modern histories of Renaissance political thought. Emphasis is usually laid on Segni's *Storie fiorentine*, see R. von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955); R. Ridolfi, 'Novità sulle "Istorie" del Segni', *Belfagor*, 15 (1960), pp. 663–76; A. Capata, 'Sondaggi sulla "virtù" postmachievelliana: Vettori, Giovio, Segni', *Italianistica*, 38 (2009), pp. 11–31.

²⁵ M. Toste, 'Evolution within Tradition: The Vernacular Works on Aristotle's *Politics* in Sixteenth-Century Italy' in G. Briguglia and T. Ricklin (eds.), *Thinking Politics in the Vernacular from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Freiburg, 2011), pp. 189–211, pp. 189–90.

service of the Medici in 1535 and during the early 1540s was sent on several diplomatic missions and held various offices under Cosimo I. In 1541, he joined the Accademia Fiorentina, the literary and philosophical academy previously known as the Accademia degli Umidi, and began corresponding with scholars such as Pier Vettori (1499–1585). By the mid-1540s, following in the footsteps of another notable Florentine scholar, Brucioli, Segni began translating some of Aristotle’s works into the vernacular, starting with the *Rhetoric* in around 1545 and continuing with the *Ethics* in 1547, the *Politics* in 1548, and the *Poetics* in 1548.²⁶ He is best known, however, for his *Storie fiorentine* covering the years 1527 to 1550 and his *Vita di Niccolò Capponi*.²⁷

From his earliest translation, that of the *Rhetoric*, Segni betrayed a belief in the social and political value of Aristotle’s writings. His purpose in translating the *Rhetoric* was to make Aristotle’s productive science more accessible. That much is clear in the letter of 10 January 1548 to Cosimo I that prefaces his edition of the *Rettorica et Poetica d’Aristotile* (*The Rhetoric and Poetics of Aristotle*) first published in 1549.²⁸ The *Rhetoric* was translated at the behest of two fellow members of the Accademia Fiorentina, Lorenzo Ridolfi and Filippo del Migliore.²⁹ In the letter, Segni underlined the greater affinity between Greek and the vernacular rather than

²⁶ Note that these are the dates of composition, not the dates of publication. I have added the dates of publication when giving the full titles of his works.

²⁷ On Segni’s life, see M. Lupo Gentile, *Studi sulla storiografia fiorentina alla corte di Cosimo I de’ Medici* (Pisa, 1905), pp. 1–94.

²⁸ Bernardo Segni, *Rettorica et Poetica d’Aristotile tradotte di Greco in lingua vulgare*, 2nd edn (Venice, 1551), fol. 2r: ‘Havendomi Principe Illustrissimo nell’anno passato posto dinanzi agli occhi per oggetto di far qualche cosa, che piacesse a V. Ecc. Et insieme che fusse per giovare senon à tutti, almeno a quella piu parte degli huomini, che per me si potesse: mi venne in animo di mettere in questa nostra lingua Fiorentina la Rettorica del grande Aristotile.’ On Segni’s *Rhetoric*, see R. Ridolgi, ‘Bernardo Segni e il suo volgarizzamento della “Retorica”’, *Belfagor*, 17 (1962), pp. 511–28; S. Bionda, ‘Aristotele in Accademia: Bernardo Segni e il volgarizzamento della “Retorica”’, *Medioevo e Rinascimento: annuario del Dipartimento di studi sul Medioevo e il Rinascimento dell’Università di Firenze*, 16 (2002), pp. 241–66.

²⁹ Segni, *Rettorica et Poetica d’Aristotile*, fols. 2r–v: ‘Et sopra di ciò piu volte pensando (quantunque ella fusse cosa da mettere in atto non molto agevole) conferito questo mio pensiero con alcuni miei amici intrinsechi, li trovai di tal’ parere, che non solamente non biasimarono, ma con persuasioni, et con prieghi mi confermarono in esso di tal’ maniera, che nessuna altra cosa giudicai poter’ fare per allhora, che piu sodisfascasse à tutti generalmente; ma in particolare à Lorenzo Ridolfi, et Filippo del Migliore: i quali in questo luogo in honor’ loro nomino volentieri. Questi nel vero havendogli io tanto chari, quanto me stesso; et essendo apresso di me et per le molte lor’ virtù, et per l’amor’ grande, che io sò, che essi mi portano, di grande autorità: persuadendomelo essi dirittamente à beneficio commune, fecero che di dar’ fine à questa opera del tutto mi deliberai.’ There is little or no information available about Lorenzo Ridolfi or Filippo del Migliore.

Latin.³⁰ He mentioned that many well-reputed men of letters had tried their hand at translation and from this drew evidence of, in his own words, ‘the richness, beauty, and majesty’ of the vernacular.³¹ He then moved on to the problems encountered when translating the *Rhetoric*. He highlighted the importance of knowing both languages and the content of the original.³² All translations, he remarked, are open to criticism, but he hoped that the ostensible novelty of what he was doing would save him from the worst of it.³³ Translating the *Rhetoric* presented a particular problem in that the form and matter of Aristotle’s arguments in the book were nuanced and complex. The *Rhetoric*, Segni remarked, presupposes knowledge of the *Dialectic* and of Aristotle’s moral philosophy. ‘Furthermore,’ in Segni’s own words, ‘the examples and proverbs that are often given to us are difficult, remote, and obscure’. Segni proposed to make these clear, immediate, and well-known.³⁴ Thus he turned to Vettori’s

³⁰ Ibid., fol. 2v: ‘Et dicasi piuttosto da me la cagione dell’haverla io tradotta nella lingua nostra. Tale è stata primieramente, perche traducendo del Greco, ho eletto di metter’ questa traduttione in una lingua, che con la Greca in molti casi ha similitudine; et molto maggiore, che non ha la Latina: sicome sanno tutti coloro, che in ciò hanno mediocre esperienza.’

³¹ Ibid., fols. 2v–3r: ‘Oltra di questo l’esempio di molti huomini litterati, et reputati per ogni qualità honorata, m’ha indotto à questo medesimo; veggendo, che tali, che non sono della patria nostra, non si disdegnano in questa di metter’ le lor’ fatiche: et di mostrar’ i lor’ frutti, come in lingua, dove si possino acconciamente adattare tutte le materia, di che si ragione, ò per dilettere, o per giovare alla civil’ compagnia, La qual’ cosa non sarebbe stata fatta, et non si farebbe da loro tutto il giorno; se in questa lingua non si scorgesse ricchezza, bellezza, et maestà: di tal’ sorte che nessuno è, che per tal’ rispetto la possa andare sfuggendo.’

³² Ibid., fol. 3r: ‘Ma tacciasi di questa materia, acciochè vano non apparisca il discorso, che voglia confermar’ cose manifeste: et piuttosto si trapassi a dir’ qualche cosa della difficoltà della traduttione in generale; et di questa particolarmente. Sa ciascuno (parlando della difficoltà prima) che il sottoporsi al render’ le parole, et i sensi da una a un’altra lingua, è impresa molto difficile, et molto pericolosa. La difficoltà è conosciuta da qualunque tenti una simil’ cosa, per essergli di bisogno d’intendere esattamente non pur’ le lingue (et quest’ è a pochi concesso) ma di più bisognandogli anchora intender’ ben’ quelle materie, di che si tratta; onde agevolmente si cade nella seconda cosa proposta; et questa è il pericolo dell’esser’ biasimato facilissimamente.’

³³ Ibid., fols. 3r–v: ‘Di qui nasce, che e’ non si ritrova alcuna traduttione (perbenchè fatta da huomini dotti) che non possa, et che non sia in qualche luogo ripresa; da quegli massimamente, che con severo giuditio voglion’ sopra di ciò dar’ sentenza. Ne’ quai pericoli sappiendo io benissimo d’esser’ incorso, non perciò mene sono astenuto; confortato a questa impresa et dal fine di poter’ a molti giovare: et anchora dal benigno giuditio di chi considerando, che forse io sia stato il primo, che in questa lingua habbia messo opere d’Aristotile, andrà perciò volentieri, o almeno senza fastidio sopportandomi qualche difetto.’

³⁴ Ibid., fol. 3v: ‘Ma quanto alla particular’ difficoltà, che nel tradur’ questa opera mi s’offerisce, è agevole ad esser’ da ciascuno considerata. Imperochè tal’ facultà in questo libro tradotta è stata trattata da Aristotile con grande artificio, et con non piccola sottigliezza. Le quai due cose havendo egli osservato quasi in tutti i suoi scritti, in questa massimamente apparisce esser’ vero il mio detto. Imperochè e’ presuppone, che la Dialettica, o parte d’essa almanco ci sia manifesta; et medesimamente ci presuppone per cosa conosciuta una parte della moral’ disciplina. Oltra di questo gli essempli, i proverbii che frequentemente ci sono indotti, sono per lo più di tal’ natura, che essi hanno del difficile, del lontano, et dell’oscuro, et qui son’ messi per agevoli, per proprinqui, et per cogniti: di maniera che di loro si può ritrarne o debole, o imperfetta cognitione.’

Commentarii in tres libros Aristotelis de arte dicendi (*Commentary in Three Books on Aristotle's Art of Rhetoric*) of 1547 to make sense of Aristotle's analysis.³⁵

The value in learning the art of rhetoric, for Segni, lay in the fact that it offered a window into the rational soul of man and enhanced his capacity to reason, and, since reason points man towards good laws and good customs, it taught man to be virtuous.³⁶ Those who used rhetoric for nefarious purposes, according to Segni, had to be hated and deemed pernicious and cruel. Rhetoric, he wrote in the letter to Cosimo I, 'must be used to steer men clear from vices and keep cities from dangers and not, on the contrary, to remove the former from virtue and bring calamities and ruin to the latter.'³⁷ In the *Dichiarazioni* (*Comments*) that follow the translation, Segni once again underlined the importance of the art of rhetoric to the well-being of the *polis*. He outlined the three rhetorical genres identified by Aristotle, namely demonstrative, deliberative, and judicial, and explained Aristotle's decision to begin with the deliberative by describing it, in Segni's own words, as 'the most beautiful and the most useful to men, even though in our days it is also the one that is least practised.'³⁸ Deliberative rhetoric dealt with how men ought to treat one another and in their private lives as well as in the government of the republic.³⁹ It is closely tied to civil science and moral philosophy.⁴⁰

³⁵ Ibid., fols. 3v–4r: 'Nè io sò se altro huomo si trovi (non pur' dico nella nostra Città, quanto in tutta l'Italia) che la dottrina, che s'appartiene per intender' perfettamente questa Arte, sappia meglio che Piero Vettori nostro huomo sopra d'ogni altro Dottissimo, et da me amato singularissimamente... Io certamente confesso in certi luoghi di questa mia traduttione essermi valuto della sua dottrina liberalissima: et in quanto alle correctione del testo: et inquanto alla esplicatione de' sensi.'

³⁶ Ibid., fol. 4v–5r: 'Mà per dir' qualcosa dell'utilità, et della eccellenza di questa facultà oratoria; sappiasi Illustrissimo Principe, che il parlare com sa ogniuno è un inditio dell'animo nostro, et è uno instrumento, col quale noi significhiamo i concetti: et di cui mancando gli huomini (avvenga che essi rettamente pensassino) non perciò potrebbero l'uno all'altro giovare. Onde si fa chiaro, che chi attende à adornare, et à cultivar bene questa parte; attende à adornar', et à cultivar' la piu bella parte, che sia nell'huomo, et la piu propria di lui: inquanto esso è detto animal' ragionevole... Però debbe ciascheduno in qualunque, grado, et fortuna egli si sia, mettere ogni diligenza in saper' ben' far' quella parte; onde e' possa conseguitar' questo fine. Il qual' fine non debbe esser' quello, che è opposto alle buone leggi, et ai buon' costumi; ma quello, che esse buone leggi, et essi buon' costumi confermano.'

³⁷ Ibid., fol. 5r: 'Anzi questo aiuto oratori debbe essere havuto in pregio per potere scampar' gli huomini da vitii; et le Città da' pericoli. Et non per far' gli primi lontani dalle virtù, et l'altre mettere in calamità, e in rovina.'

³⁸ Ibid., fol. 140r: 'Distinti adunque da lui i tre modi del parlare, mette egli di ciascun' d'esso i luoghi propii da trattargli: cioè, le materie, onde e' si possa in detti generi ragionare, cominciandosi dal genere Deliberativo, per la ragione che egli è il piu bello, et il piu utile infra gli huomini: sebene ne' nostri tempi egli è anchor' quello, che men' di tutti gli altri s'esercita.'

³⁹ Ibid., fol. 140r: 'Et quanto alle materie, che in esso genere trattansi, elle son' tutte quelle, universalmente parlando, che dependenti dal consiglio humano si travaglian' tra gli huomini l'un' con l'altro, et nella vita privata: et in quella che attende al governo delle Republiche.'

Segni stressed once again its importance again later in the *Dichiarazioni* when he described it as the main office of the orator and related it to Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions in Book 5 of the *Politics*.⁴¹

Segni began his translation of the *Politics* shortly after completing his translation of the *Ethics*, and he quickly expounded on the value of studying Aristotle's political thought in the letter of 7 October 1548 to Cosimo I that prefaces the *Trattato dei governi*.⁴² The starting point was the close connection between ethics and politics drawn in the closing chapter of his *L'Ethica d'Aristotile* of 1550.⁴³ Aristotle had stressed the importance of nurture as well as nature in forming virtuous citizens. But, as Segni recognised in his comments on the closing chapter of the *Ethics*, 'it is difficult to get from a young age a right training for virtue if one has not been brought up under right laws'.⁴⁴ So, from the very first sentence of the *Trattato*, Segni explained how it was always his intention, after rendering the *Ethics* in the vernacular, to translate and comment on Aristotle's *Politics*. In his own words, the reason was 'that this treatise follows the *Ethics* and both fall, in fact, under the broader subject of civic philosophy'.⁴⁵ Segni stood four-square in the tradition running from William of Moerbeke

⁴⁰ Ibid., fol. 140r: 'Et queste materie, che dentro a tal' genere son' trattate, corrispondono in quest'arte Oratoria a quella parte, che l'ha simile con la moral' facultà: perchè in vero da lei s'accattano i luoghi, et le materie da ragionarci dentro'.

⁴¹ Ibid., fol. 145r: 'Et qui si potrebbe dubitare, perchè, havend'ei proposto tre generi, e' si cominci dal deliberativo piuttosto che da nessun' degli altri. Alqual' dubbio si può rispondere che ciò sia fatto da lui rettamente. Imperochè il deliberativo è il piu bello: et quello, dove consiste maggiormente l'artificio Oratorio: quello dico, che è piu propio di quest'arte. Ma il consiglio, ritornando mostra egli farsi intorno a cinque cose: le quali tutte dichiara egli a sufficienza. Et dove e' mette l'esempio del Naso ragionando delle mutation' degli Stati: di tale n'ho io parlato nel Commento della Politica: medesimamente dove egli è indotto.'

⁴² On Segni's sources in the *Trattato dei governi*, see S. Bionda, 'La copia di tipografia del *Trattato dei Governi* di Bernardo Segni: Breve incursione nel laboratorio del volgarizzatore di Aristotele', *Rinascimento*, 42 (2002), pp. 409–42.

⁴³ Note that the *Ethics* was translated after the *Rhetoric* and before the *Politics*, but it was published after the *Rhetoric* and the *Politics*. On Segni's version of the *Ethics*, see M. Rolandi, "Facultas civilis". Etica e politica nel commento di Bernardo Segni all'*Etica Nicomachea*', *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 88 (1996), pp. 553–94; D. Lines, 'Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism'.

⁴⁴ Segni, *L'Ethica d'Aristotile tradotta in lingua vulgare fiorentina et comentata per Bernardo Segni* (Florence, 1550), pp. 543–4: 'Mà (seguitando) dappoi ché l'attioni son' necessarie à far' l'huomo virtuoso, importa però avvezzar' li giovin da principio con buon' costumi, e dipoi ché e' son' huomini mantenervegli dentro ò veramente col mezzo dell'ammonitioni private, e publiche, ò vero per via delle leggi, ch' alli transgressori costituischino le pene... Bisognando adunque le leggi per questo effetto appicca il Filosofo convenientemente questo trattato col libro della Politica, come si potrà vedere, dichiarando il testo.'

⁴⁵ Segni, *Trattato dei governi d'Aristotile tradotto di Greco in lingua vulgare Fiorentina* (Florence, 1549), p. 3: 'Egli è stata mia intentione Illustriss. Princ. dappoi che io haveva messo in questa nostra lingua vulgare l'Ethica d'Aristot. con al quanto di commentatione, di metterci medesimamente il trattato fatto da lui

(1215–86) down to Bruni and beyond of translating the *Ethics* before the *Politics*. Figliucci would later justify his own dialogues *De la politica* partly in terms of their succeeding his earlier treatise *De la filosofia morale* (*On Moral Philosophy*) of 1551.⁴⁶

The value of Aristotle's *Politics* was self-evident to Segni, whose choice of title, *Trattato dei governi*, is indicative of his perception of the *Politics* as an account of different forms of government in practice. Aristotle was not talking of politics in an abstract sense, but in a far more concrete way. This perception becomes evident when Segni justified the value of the *Politics* in terms of Aristotle's experience of government.

I say that... those who have practised governing and politics should be given more attention than those who have not, the reason being that actions revolve around particulars of which they have experience. This may seem to work against the great Philosopher and student of politics, given that he resembles those who have only spent time philosophising and who cannot teach anything about politics that cannot be better taught by those who rule. That, however, is completely wrong, since although as supreme Philosopher he was primarily interested in intellectual pursuits he, nevertheless, did not fail to learn about politics, having spent time at the court of King Philip II and later becoming very close to his son Alexander the Great, of whom he was Tutor and who must have held Aristotle in such esteem that we might believe that he spoke with him of many things pertaining to the state.⁴⁷

sopra la consideratione dei governi chiamato generalmente la Politica, per la ragione, che questo trattato conseguita à quello della Ethica, e sono, à dire il vero, amendue congiunti sotto l'universal' consideratione della civil' facultà...

⁴⁶ Felice Figliucci, *De la politica, ovvero scienza civile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile libri otto da M. Felice Figliucci scritti in modo di Dialogo* (Venice, 1583), fol. 1v: 'Ma egli essendo stato (come afferma) pregato, et stimolato piu volte da molti à mandar fuori la interpretazione, che io feci sopra la Politica d'Aristotile; per accompagnar quella, che nel medesimo tempo composi sopra l'Ethica del medesimo Filosofo, et poco dipoi diedi à la stampa, si come promesso havea, con molte vive ragioni; le quali Vostra Signoria Illustre potrà vedere ne la Epistola, ch'egli scrive à i Lettori, mi ha persuaso à mutar consiglio, et satisfare al suo honesto desiderio.'

⁴⁷ Segni, *Trattato dei governi*, pp. 5–6: '... anzi affermo io la prima esser' quella, che importa, et che agli sperimentati nei governi, et nelle attioni molto piu fede, che agli altri prestar' si debba: per la ragione, che l'attioni sono intorno ai particular, dei quali essi n'hanno l'esperienza. Ma tal' ragione allegata da me potrà forse parere contra 'l gran Phil[osopho] et considerator' di questa materia; come quegli, che, essendo stato occupato solamente nelle speculationi, non possa dir' cosa, che molto meglio non si sappia da chi governa: ma cio non è vero in tutto, che se bene egli principalmente, et come sommo Phil. fu intento alla parte speculativa, et nobilissima della anima nostra, non perciò mancòegli anchora di sapere le attioni humane, havendo al tempo del Re Filippo assai conversato la corte, et col figliuolo suo Alessandro il Grande havendo dappoi tenuto vita familiarissima, per essergli stato Precettore, et havuto in gran reverenza da lui; di tal maniera ch'e' si puo credere anchora, che ei trattasse con seco di molte cose appartenenti allo stato.'

Segni's portrait of Aristotle reflected the changing attitude towards the Stagirite in the Renaissance, that is from philosopher to statesman. 'It is obvious that whoever will read his writings,' Segni remarked, 'will easily notice that he spoke of governments not just as Wise Man and as Philosopher but also as one of those men who has never done anything other than practise politics.'⁴⁸

Actually, I will dare say that Aristotle's discussion is of such value that nothing else can be said that is of either greater worth or deserving greater praise than what he wrote, who had more experience than his Master Plato, my Illustrious Prince. For Plato, who thought about these things in broader terms, spoke of them in way that is more beautiful to be heard than it is likely to be witnessed in the world, having created a Republic with so many uncommon laws that I feel it can only be found in those places that no one has never heard of and that, despite their fame, no one has ever seen.⁴⁹

Segni joined other scholars of the *comparatio Platonis et Aristotelis* tradition in criticising Plato for his excessive idealism and utopianism. Bruni too had argued that Aristotle's *Politics* 'gave support to normal usages and ways of life, instead of imagining strange, ghastly, and unprofitable ones'.⁵⁰

The *Politics*, however, offered not only a useful guide to politics by someone with real experience of it but also a defence of princely rule, according to the letter to Cosimo I that prefaces the *Trattato*. Aristotle's realism could be used to justify the idea that liberty is best safeguarded not by the many or the few but by a single individual. 'One can clearly see... that the best and freest of all governments is that ruled by a good Prince who rules for the

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 6: 'Et certamente che chi andrà leggendo questi suoi scritti, potrà fare agevolmente giuditio, ch'egli habia trattato dei governi, non pur' come Saggio, et come Phil[osopho] ma anchora come uno di queglii, che non habbia mai fatto altro, che adoperarsi in simili mestieri...'

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 6: '... anzi ardirò io di dire in questo caso, che di tal' natura sia questa sua consideratione, che fuor' di lei, non si possa dirne nessuno altro cosa, che molto vaglia, ò che molto meriti d'esser' pregiata, nella quale ha egli Illustriss. P[rincipe] come queglii, che fu piu pratico, che non fu il suo Maestro Platone, (et sia cio detto con riverenza di coloro, che Platone ammirano come Divino) ha egli dico di lui me' trattato simili materie: Imperoche Platone, che piu universalmente l'andò considerando, trattò di loro in un' modo, che è molto piu bello ad essere udito, che e' non è agevole ad esser' veduto nel mondo, havendo formato una Republica con tanti ordini, et si disusati da queglii, che son' messi in costume, che appena stimo io, che una si fatta ritrovar' sene possa in quei luoghi, dei quali non s'ha notitia alcuna, ch'e' si ritrovino, se non per una certa fama, ma non gia che e; si sien' mai veduti.'

⁵⁰ Bruni, *Vita Aristotelis* in Bruni, *Opere*, pp. 501–29, p. 520. All English translations are from Bruni, *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, ed. G. Griffiths et al. (Binghamton, N.Y., 1987), pp. 288–9.

Common Good'.⁵¹ Yet, this interpretation appears to be far more a statement of propaganda than a reflection of Segni's reading of the *Politics*. His words in the dedication did not match what he had written earlier about Girolamo Savonarola's (1452–98) republic in the *Storie fiorentine* of 1550.

This man [Girolamo Savonarola], who in our country had acquired a great reputation not just with his ingenuity and with the art of rhetoric, which he had aplenty, but with the use of prophecy, holiness, and the divine more than the human, was able to show Florentine Citizens the mistakes of past States and point them towards building a free and universal State where the People had the power to elect Magistrates and confirm Laws by way of an assembly known as the *Consiglio Grande* (Great Council) for which a great hall was built in the Palazzo della Signoria that nowadays we see put to different uses. This way of governing was taken, for the most part, from Aristotle, since that great Philosopher, who knew all that could be known about nature, taught in his books that whoever wanted to form a free government had to place it in the hands of the People, that is not every vile individual that lives in the City but only he who can participate in the honours and public goods of the City, and, although he lay the government in the People's hands, it did not mean that it was in charge of everything but, on the contrary, only specific things, among which only the election of Magistrates and the confirmation of Laws that had been previously considered by smaller *Consigli* (Councils).⁵²

⁵¹ Segni, *Trattato dei governi*, p. 7: 'Ma Aristotile il gran Philosopho, che cio benissimo vidde, et che conobbe gli huomini non poter vivere di vita piu che da huomo; però nello assettare i governi doppo l'esatte considerationi da lui fatte degli perfetti, et che piu tosto in nome, che in fatto si van' ritrovando, si volta à considerare i men' buoni, et quegli, ch'ei metter per i transgressi, et per i peccanti, ai quali, (si come à quegli, che sono in fatto) cerca ei di porgere aiuto, et d'andargli migliorando, si sforza si come potrà vedere chiaramente chiunque leggerà questi scritti, nei quali Illustrissimo Principe oltre à molte cose, che gli huomini dei tempi nostri intendono à rovescio, si potrà egli anchora far' lor' manifesto uno errore, il quale è in molti invecchiato, et tale è, che e' si stimano la libertà non potere essere, se non dove i Popoli hanno in mano il governo: Che allincontro si puo manifestamente vedere lei non solamente coi piu, ma molto meglio coi meno, che sien' buoni, et ottimamente con un' solo stare appoggiata, anzi finalmente ottimo governo, et liberissimo sopra di tutti gli altri esser' quello che sia governato da un' Principe buono, et che governi per fin' di ben' Publico.'

⁵² Segni, *Storie fiorentine... dall'anno MDXXVII al MDLV colla Vita di Niccolò Capponi* (3 vols., Milan, 1805), i, pp. 23–5: 'Girolamo Savonarola, Frate Ferrarese dell'ordine di San Domenico, e Predicatore eccellentissimo, che risplendeva per la bontà della vita, quanto per Lettere, nelle quali era consumatissimo. Costui, che aveva nella patria nostra conquistato gran fede non più coll'ingegno e coll'arte oratoria, che aveva grande, che col nome di profezia, e di santità, e divino più che umano, potette mostrare a' Cittadini Fiorentini gli errori de' passati Stati, e rivoltargli a costituire uno Stato libero, ed universale, dove il Popolo fosse padrone di dare i Magistrati, e di confermare le Leggi mediante una concione ragunata, che si chiamò Consiglio Grande, e per uso della quale a' conforti suoi fu fabbricata una sala grande nel Palazzo della Signoria, che ora si vede in essere, ma per diversi esercizi. Questo modo di governo fu cavato per la più parte d'Aristotile; perciocchè quel gran Filosofo, che seppe quanto della natura si poteva sapere, insegnò ne' suoi libri, che chi voleva assettare un governo libero, bisognava metterlo in mano al Popolo, intendendo per Popolo, non ogni vile persona, che abita nella Città, ma quella sola, che è partecipe degli onori, e degli utili pubblici; e sebbene mette in mano al Popolo il governo, non intende ch'egli abbia a esser padrone d'ogni cosa, ma sì bene di certe

The establishment of a seemingly Aristotelian government between 1494 and 1498 meant that, in Segni's words, Savonarola had to be 'honoured and loved by the Florentines no differently than Numa Pompilius was honoured and loved by the Romans, Lycurgus by the Spartans, and Solon by the Athenians.'⁵³

III. ARISTOTLE AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

Segni's commentary on the *Trattato* reveals the extent to which the *Politics* was seen in the Renaissance as a lens through which to examine recent history. Aristotle's remarks about Carthage prompted Segni's reflections on the foundation of Venice's strength.⁵⁴ His remarks about constitutional monarchy prompted parallels with the Doge, the Great Turk, the King of France, and the King of Spain.⁵⁵ Book 5 of Aristotle's *Politics* formed the kernel of Aristotle's argument, and, in Segni's view, read almost as 'a history of all of Greece'.⁵⁶ A more diligent

particolari, fra le quali intende, che sia la creazione de' Magistrati, e la confermazione delle Leggi, che siano state prima da pochi, e da più stretti Consigli considerate.'

⁵³ Segni, *Storie fiorentine*, i, p. 25: 'Onde Fra Girolamo Savonarola, che alla patria nostra conseguì un tal fine d'avervi con sì perfetta ragione costituito il governo libero, debbe esser messo tra i buoni datori di leggi, e debbe essere onorato e amato per tal fatto da' Fiorentini, non altrimenti che Numa dal Popolo di Roma, e Licurgo da' Lacedemoni, e Solone dagli Ateniesi.'

⁵⁴ Segni, *Trattato dei governi*, p. 108: 'Ove e' dice nell'ultimo dei Candiotti, che egli erano sicuri pe' 'l sito. Par' che tai ragioni convenghin' benissimo ai Vinitiani, i quali forse si mantengon' pur per beneficio del sito, che per altri buoni ordini: anchor' che e' n'habbino assai, et buoni et che tal' Republica meriti d'esser' sommamente lodata.'

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 167: 'In questo Capitolo viene il Filosofo à dir' particolarmente della spetie proposta de' governi, cominciandosi dal Regno: imperochè il Regno è il primo, et l'ottimo governo di tutti gli altri tre buoni: del quale ne mette ei quattro sorti in questo Capitolo. Il primo è quello degli Spartani, che forse ha similitudine col Doge di Vinegia. Il secondo quello che è appresso ai Barbari, et nella Asia: sicome è hoggi il gran' Turcho. Il terzo è l'Esinnete, che è quasi il Dittatore, che s'usava in Roma: et dice di tale ch'egli è (per dir' così) come una Tirannide: che vuol' dire, ch'e' non è Tirannide veramente. Perchè la Tirannide vera non è eletta, ma è usurpata per forza: onde chi è eletto alla Signoria, giustamente non si puo dir' Tiranno. La quarta spetie è quella, che forse è simile al Re di Francia, ò di Spagna: dove tai Re sono antiquati, et hannovi havuto principio ò per i benefitij fatti à quei Popoli: ò per qualche altra honesta cagione.'

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 248: 'In questo libro V. al guiditio mio si tratta della importanza di tutta questa politica consideratione, nel quale il Filosofo queste materie del le mutationi, et conservationi degli Stati va esaminando diligentissimamente, et con gran sottigliezza secondo che patisce il soggetto; il quale per esser' incerto, et di cose particolari è dal Filosofo sempre confermato con gli essempli: non essendo per sù li materie il migliore argomento di lui... Et però questo libro è come una historia di tutta la Grecia; la quale caverà chi desidera di me' saperla della historia di Tuciddide: et delle vite di Plutarcho.'

commentator, he remarked, could have added alongside it modern examples.⁵⁷ Segni also bridged the gap between his readers and Aristotle by highlighting the affinity between Aristotle and Machiavelli.⁵⁸

The task, however, of relating Aristotle's thought to recent history fell largely on the Ragusan statesman and writer Vito di Gozzi and his *Dello stato delle repubbliche*, a pro-Venetian dialogue between himself and the Ragusan poet Dinko Ranjina (also known as Domenico Ragnina) (1536–1607), which is divided into eight days, each one more or less corresponding to the respective book of Aristotle's *Politics*. The titlepage of the dialogue, with its reference to modern examples, made the contemporary feel of his work obvious (Figure 6). These examples coloured it throughout and especially *Day 5*. The dangers of ostracism were highlighted by referring to the damage caused by the *fuoriusciti* when Florence was divided into Guelphs and Ghibellines.⁵⁹ The threat posed by Rinaldo degli Albizzi (1370–1442) after he was banished from Florence was also cited as evidence.⁶⁰ The idea that foes should either be turned into friends or annihilated was supported by the examples of Venice, who hired the condottiere Francesco I Gonzaga (1395–1444) in 1434, and the Swiss, whose failure to stem

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 248: 'Sarebbesi ben' potuto far' da chi havesse voluto usar' maggior' diligenza, di metter' sempre à canto agli essempli addotti da Aristotile qualcun'altro de' più moderni, ò dei Romani; ò di quei, che son seguiti dappoi, et che tutto'l giorno seguono: et massimamente in Italia.'

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 290: 'Doppo questo tratta delle congiure in quanti modi elle si fanno, et per quante cagioni contra i Principi; et dice molte cose degne da esser notate, et avvertite da loro: delle quali buona parte n'hà tolto di qui il Machiavello nel suo libro del Principe. Essendovi infra l'altre notata anchor' quella di coloro, che congiurano contra li Principi, per acquistar' gloria. Da' quali afferma il Filosofo con difficoltà potersi guardare i Principi, perchè tali congiuranti non si curano di vivere. Ne alcun rimedio migliore hanno i Principi per guardarsi da simili, che vivere in tal maniera che'e' sieno amati dallo universale; perchè stando fermo questo, non si troverà mai chi da tal fine ridotto tenti lor nulla incontro.'

⁵⁹ Nicolò Vito di Gozzi, *Dello stato delle repubbliche secondo la mente di Aristotele con essempli moderni* (Venice, 1591), p. 244–5: 'La terza causa particolare di questa seditione dissi essere l'eccesso d'una podestà, perche quando uno, o molti superbamente vogliono avvantaggiare, o per nobiltà, o per ricchezze gli altri cittadini, muovono la seditione, e tentano, se venir potesse loro fatto, d'esser superiori in potenza a tutti gli altri, e tutte le leggi, e gli ordini vogliono porre sotto il giogo loro; onde contra questi anticamente in Argo, et in Athene (come hieri vi dissi) era ordinato quel magistrato di Ostracismo; cioè d'esilio, accioche questi non potessero haver animo tale di mutar lo stato della Repubblica, et opprimer il suo dominio, ma saria molto meglio, dice il nostro Filosofo, che contra questi potenti da principio sempre si provedesse, non lasciandoli salire tanto alto nella Repubblica, che poi saliti con Ostracismo bandirli dalla città; perche porger a tanto danno il rimedio per via d'esilio è molto pericoloso; et per rimediare ad un male incorrer in uno peggiore è cosa da huomo imprudente, e stolto: questi come sono sbanditi, e fuoriusciti tentano ogni via, e modo come la patria opprimer possano, e vendicarsi delle cittadinesche ingiurie... Quanto danno recarono i fuoriusciti benditi dalla Città di Firenze, mentre che erano divisi nella parte Guelfa, e Gibellina? R[agnina]. Molto.'

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 245: 'G[ozzi]. In che pericolo condusse la Città di Firenze, essend nadito da quella Rinaldo de gli Albizi con lo esercito potente del Duca di Milano. R[agnina]. Grandissimo.'

Dello STATO delle
REPVBLCHE

Secondo la mente

June 1827

DI ARISTOTELE
CON ESSEMPI MODERNI

Giornate otto,

DI M. NICOLO' VITO DI GOZZI

Gentilhuomo Raguseo, Accademico occulto.

Con CCXXII. AVERTIMENTI CIVILI dell'istesso,
molto curiosi, & vtili per coloro, che gouernano
STATI.

Et nel fine vna APOLOGIA dell'HONOR Civile.

Con i Sommarij à ciascuna GIORNATA, & la Tauola delle cose più
NOTABILI.

CON PRIVILEGI.



IN VENETIA . CID . IO . XCI.

Presso Aldo.

Auclar.

2 R. 35.

Fig. 6. Nicolò Vito di Gozze, *Dello stato delle republiche* (Venice, 1591).

the 1336 revolt immediately almost ended in the complete destruction of their confederation.⁶¹ The risk that foreigners, burdened by taxes and deprived of honours, might grow in number and overthrow the rulers of the city was highlighted by referring to Siena, Genoa, Zurich, and Cologne.⁶² The importance of having censors, such as Vito di Gozzi himself, was underlined by Venice's, Genoa's, and Lucca's decision to restore that office or establish a similar one.⁶³ Venice and Ragusa stood as models: 'for instance, by following this famous Republic [of Venice],' he wrote, 'for nine hundred years, in this Adriatic Sea of ours, we [Ragusans] have kept our civil liberties and inviolable Aristocracy, which has never changed, neither for better nor for worse, nor suffered any disorders.'⁶⁴

Parallels between Aristotle's political thought and the constitution of Venice were commonplace in the Renaissance. Gasparo Contarini's (1483–1542) *De magistratibus et republica Venetorum* (*On the Commonwealth and Government of Venice*) of 1523–4 and published in 1543 made frequent references, if only implicitly, to Aristotle's political theory.⁶⁵ The Cypriot writer

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 245–6: 'Ma li savi sono di parere, che cotali huomini [superbi] si facciano d'inimici amici, o che s'uccidano incontanente: il primo consiglio seguì Cesare Augusto, scoperta che gli fù la congiura di Cinna, dicendo quelle parole; *vitam tibi Cinna iterum do etc.* dal qual Cinna poi Augusto fù fatto herede universale. Così fecero i Venetiani havendo preso il Duca di Mantova allhor capital nimico loro invece di togli lo stato lo crearono con inaudita magnanimità loro General Capitano, che reuscì poi realissimo: così persuase Pontino Vecchio Capitano de Samniti a suoi di liberar lo essercito de i Romani rinchiuso dentro alle fauci dell'Appennino.'

⁶² Ibid., p. 250: 'Come sono in gran numero i forestieri nelle città, per ogni minima occasione si sollevano, e cacciano i Naturali Signori: così avvenne a Siena, a Genova, a Zuric, a Collonia; dove essendo assai cresciuti gli stranieri carichi di Tasse, e mal trattati, e senza alcuna participatione de gli honori, scacciarono i Signori, e ne ammazzarono la maggior parte.'

⁶³ Ibid., p. 273: 'Questi censori si sogliono ancora crear in Venetia, Genova, e Lucca, et particolarmente in Venetia nel 1566. Si crearono tre Magistrati, che furono dimandati i Signori sopra il ben viver della città. Tra noi ancora questi ufficiali furono creati la prima volta del 1534. Et questo anno vedendo i miei Signori la troppo licentiosa vita d'alcuni giovenastri immersi in tutte le delitie, e piaceri dishonesti senza ponto di vergogna, crearono cinque ufficiali di pregati, tra i quali io sono uno, per reprimer tanta sfaciataggine di tanto licentioso vivere. La Republica di Genova in vece di censori ha deputato dieci Anciani, che sono eletti come Magistrato, cioè quattro del consiglio de i sessanta, et sei del consiglio de i ducento, che ritengono a freno tutto il popolo in guisa, che pochissimi delitti rimangono impuniti. Si vede adunque, che la maggior parte delle ben ordinate Republiche hanno usato i Censori chiamati dal nostro Filosofo speculatori per rimedio della traista vita di ciascun cittadino, che perturba, et dishonest la Republica.'

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 284: 'Lo esemplare del qual governo santo, et divino trovasi a' tempi nostri nella Republica Venetiana, dove uno il migliore è proposto al governo di tanti ottimati, et per esser così divinamente ordinata non fù possibile mai, che quella habbia potuto patire violenza alcuna, et noi, Signor Cavaliere, per essemplio, et imitatione di sì celeberrima Republica, in questo nostro Adriatico Mare sono novecento anni, che ci manteniamo in libertà civile, et Aristocratia inviolabile, che mai ne per prospera, ne per avversa fortuna ha patito mutatione, o disordine alcuno.'

⁶⁵ On Gasparo Contarini, see F. Gilbert, 'Religion and Politics in the Thought of Gasparo Contarini' in T. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 90–116 reprinted in F. Gilbert, *History: Choice and Commitment* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 247–67; G.

Giason Denores's *Breve institutione dell'ottima repubblica* was more explicit. This tract, written as a letter to the Venetian nobleman Giovanni Mocenigo (1558–1623) a few months after the death of Doge Alvise I Mocenigo (1507–77), claimed that Venice was the embodiment of Aristotle's political ideas.⁶⁶ And Aristotle was used to vindicate more than Venice's constitutional arrangements. The Venetian historian and statesman Paolo Paruta (1540–98), for instance, assessed Venetian foreign policy in his *Discorsi politici* of 1599 with Aristotle's political analysis firmly in mind.⁶⁷

Vito di Gozzi not only made reference to recent history, and Venice in particular, but also used ancient, medieval, and contemporary authors, such as Francesco Patrizi da Cherso (1529–97) and Jean Bodin (1530–96), to elucidate Aristotle's political thought. The threat of corruption and the need to ensure that offices could not be bought was pointed out, for instance, by referring to Bodin's *Les six livres de la République* (*Six Books of the Commonwealth*) of 1576.⁶⁸ Even more emblematic are Vito di Gozzi's words on tyrannicide. Bodin had argued in his *République* that tyrannicide was only very rarely justified.

Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini: un magistrato veneziano al servizio della cristianità* (Florence, 1988); G. Fragnito and F. Cavazzana Romanelli (eds.), *Gaspare Contarini e il suo tempo* (Venice, 1988); E.G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform* (Berkeley, Cal., 1993); C.M. Furey, *Erasmus, Contarini, and the Religious Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, 2006).

⁶⁶ Giason Denores, *Breve institutione dell'ottima repubblica* (Venice, 1578), fol. 2v: 'Per entro di queste mie imperfettioni, quasi tra folte nuvole discernerà pur elle col suo acuto giudicio qualche raggio della sapienza di quel gran Philosopho [Aristotele], et potrà vedere, che fine egli attribuisse à questa felicissima Republica, che forma di regimento le desse, et quai leggi le accommodasse per conseguirlo, et quanto la vostra chiarissima patria [Venezia] con le sue divine ordinationi habia non pur arrivato, ma longamente trapassato qualunque altro humano discorso, et pensiero, dal che s'inalzerà finalmente à considerarla gloria, et la Maestà di colui, che in essa poco avanti sedea Prencipe, hora il cielo se ne è voluto adornare, il quale essendo à lei stato così grave et propinquo parente, le accenderà nell'animo un continuo desiderio alla laude, all'honore, et ad ogni illustrissima attione.' Denores is absent from virtually all histories of Renaissance political thought. Some biographical information may be found in F.E. Budd, 'A Minor Italian Critic of the Sixteenth Century: Jason Denores', *The Modern Language Review*, 22 (1927), pp. 421–34. Some brief remarks about this political ideas may be found in W.J. Bouwsma, *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550–1640* (New Haven, Conn., 2002), p. 248; W.J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley, Cal., 1968), p. 269.

⁶⁷ Paolo Paruta, *Discorsi politici* in *Opere politiche*, ed. C. Monzani (2 vols., Florence, 1852), ii, 2.1–2. Paruta only explicitly mentions Aristotle twice in the *Discorsi* (1.1 and 1.15). However, the Aristotelian complexion of some of his observations, especially on Venice, is evident. On Paruta's political ideas see A. Pompeati, 'Le dottrine politiche di Paolo Paruta', *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, 46 (1905), pp. 286–358, pp. 296–8; W.J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, pp. 200–201; A. Baiocchi, 'Paolo Paruta: ideologia e politica nel Cinquecento veneziano', *Studi veneziani*, n.s., 3 (1976), pp. 203–82; M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, pp. 231–7.

⁶⁸ Vito di Gozzi, *Dello stato delle repubbliche*, p. 274: 'R[agnina]. Sta bene, ma che rimedio potrebbesi dare alle seditioni seguite per cagione del danno, e del guadagno? G[ozzi]. Per rimedio di quest

If the prince is an absolute sovereign, as are the true kings of France, Spain, England, Scotland, Ethiopia, Turkey, Persia and Muscovy, whose authority is unquestionably their own, and not shared with any of their subjects, then it is in no circumstances permissible either by any of their subjects in particular, or in general, to attempt anything against the life and honor of their king, either by process of law or force of arms, even though he has committed all the evil, impious and cruel deeds imaginable.⁶⁹

Vito di Gozzi essentially translates Bodin's words and mentions Aquinas' (1225–74) *Summa theologiae* (*Theological Summary*) of 1265–74 and the Italian Dominican monk Serafino Razzi's (1531–1631) *Cento casi di coscienza* (*One Hundred Moral Doubts*) of 1578, whence he probably took the reference to Aquinas.⁷⁰

The differences between Aristotle's political thought and Bodin's were expounded on, in the early seventeenth century, by the Italian papal diplomat and political writer Fabio Albergati in his *Discorsi politici*, a treatise in five books 'in which,' in his own words, 'the

perturbatione civile il nostro Filosofo ci assegna alcuni belli documenti, ma prima dichiaraci quello che giova universalmente a tutti gli stati civili, et specialmente, a quelli de pochi, di molti, e di ottimati chiamiamo, e poi dichiara i particolari di ciascuno di questi stati. Et quanto al primo dice, che ogni diligenza, et studio si deve porre per beneficio della Republica di vietare, che niuno possa ercare il Magistrato, od alcuna altra dignità civile col mezzo de i denari: *maximum autem est in omni Republica et legibus, et alia dispensatione sic ipsam consitutam esse, ut non liceat magistratibus quaestum facere*. Che maggior scandalo nascer non può in vero in una Republica, che quando gli honori, e le dignità civili a prezzo di denari si comperano, ne alcuna piu sordida, e piu pernitirosa mercatantia si può introdurre che quella de gli honori, dignità, et benegici è ben vero, che quando la Republica si trovasse in estremo pericolo si potria ciò fare per sollevatione di quella. La medesima cagione (come dice Bodino) sospinse il Re Francesco primo l'anno 1527. a separare le giudicature civili dalle criminali, assegnando poi l'une, e l'altre, et generalmente tutti gli ufficij a colui, che piu ne offeriva: altrimenti niun maggior scandalo, ne maggior dispregio si può far al popolo in una Republica che havere per piu honorate quelle persone, che hanno piu danari.'

⁶⁹ Jean Bodin, *The Six Bookes of a Commonweale*, ed. M.J. Tooley (Oxford, 1955), p. 67.

⁷⁰ Vito di Gozzi, *Dello stato delle repubbliche*, p. 288–9: 'Io non dico però, che i Prencipi assolutamente supremi, e legittimi Signori, come i Re di Francia, Spagna, et Inghilterra, et altri, sia lecito a i sudditi ammazzarli, quantunque havessero eglino commesso le maggiori ribalderie, e crudeltà del mondo, si come non è lecito ad alcun infermo di qualunque pericoloso male tagliar il membro affetto di sua propria mano; essendo questo ufficio solo appartenete al medico, il che dimostrò con bellissime ragioni Gio[vanni] Bodino, et S. Thomaso nella 2.2.q.64. art. 3. Et particolarmente è stato dichiarato con molta dottrina dal Reverendo Padre Rafael Razzi Fiorentino da me molto amato in quel suo bel trattato di cento casi di coscienza caso 41. Si come ancor non mai fù lecito al figliuolo di metter le mani, nel sangue del proprio Padre, ancor che scelerato fosse; ma si bene a gli altri Prencipi, e Re strani dū lecito difender tutti i popoli dalle Tiranndi. I Re sono come Padri, et Pastori verso i suoi Cittadini, che il tutto a beneficio commune, et non al suo proprio e particolare indrizzano, et è felice la vita d'un Re per esser amato da ogni uno; e misera la vita d'un Tiranno, il qual da suoi proprii figliuoli non si tiene sicuro.' Cf. Nicolò Vito di Gozzi, *Dello stato delle repubbliche*, p. 292: 'Qual piu egregio, e memorabil fatto si può far mai al mondo, che ammazzar un Tiranno, e ridurre i cittadini nella gioconda, e cara libertà.'

political doctrine of Jean Bodin is refuted, and that of Aristotle is defended' (Figure 7).⁷¹ That book is a revised version of his unpublished *Antibodino* of 1596 written in order to gain access, through the Jesuit Cardinal and Aristotelian Francisco de Toledo (1532–96), to Bodin's *République* which had been placed on the Index earlier that year.⁷² Albergati's *Discorsi politici* was a response to the growing volume of reason of state literature and ideas emerging at the end of the sixteenth century. The title of the earlier manuscript, that is *Antibodino*, is indicative. It is reminiscent of the French jurisconsult Innocent Gentillet's (1535–88) *Anti-Machiavel* of 1576. Albergati offered a breakdown of Bodin's premises and refuted them one by one by referring to Aristotle.

Albergati's *Discorsi politici*, however, was the first step towards a more thorough Aristotelian anti-Bodinian, anti-Machiavellian, and anti-reason of state discussion on how to establish and preserve a republic, his *La repubblica regia* (*The Regal Republic*) of 1627.⁷³ The

⁷¹ On Fabio Albergati's political thought, see A. Wehn, *Des Publizisten Fabio Albergati Leben und Werk* (Bonn, 1913); E. Gianturco, 'Bodin's conception of the venetian constitution and his critical rift with Fabio Albergati', *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 18 (1938), pp. 684–95; R. de Mattei, *Il problema della "Ragion di Stato" nell'età della Controriforma* (Milan and Naples, 1979); R. de Mattei, *Il pensiero politico italiano nell'età della Controriforma* (2 vols., Milan and Naples, 1982–4), ii, pp. 133–6 and pp. 269–83; A. del Fante, 'Tendenze utopistiche, antimachiavellismo, e "ragion di stato" nella "Repubblica regia" di Fabio Albergati', *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia toscana di scienze e lettere "La Colombaria"*, 52 (1987), pp. 141–58; G. Zucchini, 'Botero e Albergati: ragion di Stato e utopia' in A.E. Baldini (ed.), *Botero e la "Ragion di Stato"* (Florence, 1992), pp. 287–302; A.E. Baldini, 'Albergati contro Bodin: dall' "Antibodino" ai "Discorsi politici"', *Pensiero politico*, 30 (1997), pp. 287–310; T. Wahnbaeck, 'Die Reaktion der Kurie auf die Begründung des Absolutismus: Fabio Albergati versus Jean Bodin', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 26 (1999), pp. 245–67.

⁷² Fabio Albergati, *De i discorsi politici* (Rome, 1602), p. 1: 'Desiderando io di vedere la repubblica del Bodino per sapere l'opinione sua, intorno alla giustitia da lui chiamata harmoniosa, hebbi il Cardinale Toledo di honorata memoria favorevole poco prima, ch'egli mancasse, ad ottenermene licenza, e con occasione così fatta datosi egli à discorrere sopra quel libro, e parendogli che la fama della dottrina sua non meno con grave scandalo, che contro al dovere, fusse da molti celebrata, si per le falsità sue, come per li perniciosi precetti, che contrari al ben vivere introducea; venne ad essortarmi à pigliar carico di manifestare, che'l Bodino conforme al costume de i cattivi politici de i tempi nostri si era altrettanto da i veri principii della politica, quanto da quelli della dottrina cattolica dilungato.' On the inclusion of Bodin's *République* in the Index, see R. Crahay, 'Jean Bodin devant la censure: la condamnation de la "République"' in *Il Pensiero politico*, 14 (1981), pp. 154–72; L. Firpo, 'Ancora sulla condanna di Bodin' in *Il Pensiero politico*, 14 (1981), pp. 173–86; A.E. Baldini, 'Jean Bodin e l'Indice dei Libri proibiti' in C. Stango (ed.), *Censura ecclesiastica e cultura politica in Italia tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Florence, 2000), pp. 79–100. Francisco de Toledo was responsible for banning Francesco Patrizi's anti-Aristotelian work *Nova de universis philosophia* in 1594. See P.F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, Md., 2002), p. 306.

⁷³ Albergati, *La repubblica regia* (Bologna, 1627), p. 1: 'L'intentione mia è di trattare della Republica regia, figurando in essa uno stato alla natura humana possibile, e confacevole; con riguardare com'egli si forma, come si corrompe, e come si conserva... Si comprenderanno insieme non meno le falsità, che l'empietà di coloro, ch' a' tempi nostri hanno follemente cercato di persuadere, che per interesse di stato sia lecito ogni malvagità usare, e' in fin' à Dio ribellandosi, servirsi della Religione per mezzo alle

DE I DISCORSI
POLITICI
DI FABIO ALBERGATI
LIBRI CINQUE

Ne i quali viene riprouata la dottrina politica di Gio.
Bodino, e difesa quella d'Aristotele.

ALL'ILLVSTRISSE REVERENDISS. SIG.

IL SIG. PIETRO CARD.
ALDOBRANDINO.

Con due tauole vna de Capitoli, l'altra delle
cose notabili.

CON PRIVILEGIO.



In ROMA Appresso Luigi Zannetti. MDCII.

Con Licenza de Superiori

Fig. 7. Fabio Albergati, *De i discorsi politici* (Rome, 1602).

preface highlights how Albergati's analysis, in his own words, rested on 'natural and political reasons, to which all men, albeit of different religions, as long as they are not afflicted by blind intellect, can agree on'.⁷⁴ In other words, he planned to show how the faulty premises of reason of state writers led to a bad kind of politics, also known as false reason of state, 'that caused suffering to the whole of humanity and was detrimental to both legitimate kings and tyrants for whom their precepts were designed'.⁷⁵ The book made extensive use of Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions, that is 'the central and most important' aspect of Aristotle's *Politics* to borrow Albergati's words from the *Discorsi politici*.⁷⁶ Albergati pitted Aristotle against Machiavelli and referred to Book 5 of the *Politics* when arguing that the prince or king had to be of supreme virtue.⁷⁷

IV. ARISTOTLE AND REASON OF STATE

Albergati's use of Aristotle did nothing to stem the flow of reason of state literature, often seen as signalling the end of Aristotelian political theory. From the 1590s onwards, reason of state became perhaps the dominant European political tradition, while new versions of Aristotle's

sceleratezze, e per così fatte strade caminando s'hanno recato à gloria l'insegnare il modo da reggere gl'Imperii.'

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 1: 'Et avenga che siamo catolici, e intendiamo, che nel nostro cuore, e in queste carte sia la fede catolica con caratteri indelebili conservata, e sappiamo, che dal vero della religion nostra tutte le attioni della nostra vita, e tanto le pubbliche, quanto le private si dovrebbero regolare; tuttavia scopo nostro non è di convincere gli avversari co' principii (quantunque veri) della medesima fede, a' quali, ò à gran parte di loro essi non consentono; ma le falsità loro siamo per palesare principalmente con ragioni politiche e naturali; alle quali tutti gli huomini, benche di religioni diverse, mentre da cecità d'intelletto non siano oppressi, sogliono consentire.'

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 1: 'Dalla qual cosa scoprirassi cotali semi esser' à tutta l'umanità pestiferi, e non pure nel vero Prencipe incomportabili, ma dannosi infin' allo stesso Tiranno, à solo beneficio di cui paiono ritrovati.'

⁷⁶ Albergati, *De i discorsi politici*, p. 290: 'Havendo veduto quello, che'l Boduno ha scritto in universale, et in particolare dell'essere di ciascuna repubblica, per quanto al presente proposito può bastare, et insieme de i magistrati, delle leggi, e delle proportioni, che nell'esercitare la giustizia si ricercano, verremo à considerare quello, che de gli accidenti, e passioni loro ha divisato; delle mutationi; dell'accrescimento, e decrescimento di esse, e del prevedere cotali cose. E conciosiache questa parte sia principalissima, et importantissima fra tutti gli affari politici saremo costretti a discorrerne alquanto largamente à fine che scoprendosi in ciò i mancamenti dell'avversario, possiamo chiarirci affatto, ch'egli delle materie civili quanto sono state più belle, e più rilevanti, tanto meno ha inteso.'

⁷⁷ Albergati, *La repubblica regia*, p. 86: 'E nel cap[itolo] 10 del 5 scrive [Aristotele], che la podestà reale è data per difesa de gli huomini da bene à persona di somma virtù. E fra le virtù ricerca in esso la religione, perche nel cap[itolo] 11 del 5 della Politica hora allegato, dicendo, che 'l tiranno di malitia rimessa per conservarsi ha da porre ogni studio in far patere il suo governo regio; e nelle conditioni à cotal effetto necessarie pone il mostrarsi religioso, significando così fatta qualità esser propria del Rè.'

Politics stopped rolling off the presses. The words of the Dominican friar and anti-Aristotelian Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) in his *Aforismi politici* (*Political Aphorisms*) of 1601 and *Quod reminiscuntur et convertentur ad Dominum universi fines terrae* (*That All the Ends of the Earth Shall Remember and Turn to the Lord*) of 1618 are emblematic. Politics was eventually equated with reason of state even though reason of state, in fact, for Campanella as for many others, referred to a false kind of politics geared towards self-interest and evil-doing.⁷⁸

Albergati, however, had failed to notice the close relationship between Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions and reason of state literature. The phrase *ragion di stato* (reason of state) or *ragione ed uso degli stati* (reason and practice of the states) was first used by Francesco Guiccardini (1483–1540) in his *Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze* of around 1525 to refer to policies that go against one's conscience.⁷⁹ It was given a more precise meaning, that is politics as expediency *tout court*, by the Florentine poet and writer Giovanni della Casa (1503–56) in his *Orazione a Carlo Quinto Imperatore* (*Oration to the Emperor Charles V*) of 1547.⁸⁰ It was later popularised by Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) with his *Della ragion di stato* (*On Reason of State*) of 1589. However, before the term became common currency, it had been used by Antonio Scaino (1524–1616) in his preface to *La Politica d'Aristotile ridotta in modo di parafrasi* (*The Politics of Aristotle Paraphrased*) of 1578 to entice his dedicatee, the son of Pope Gregory XIII (1502–85), Giacomo Boncompagni (1548–1612), to read his work.⁸¹ Only later was Aristotle

⁷⁸ Tommaso Campanella, *Quod reminiscuntur et convertentur ad Dominum universi fines terrae*, ed. R. Amerio (Padua, 1939), p. 62 and *Aforismi politici*, ed. L. Firpo (Turin, 1941), p. 163. Cf. Ludovico Zuccolo, *Considerazioni Politiche e Morali sopra cento oracoli d'illustri personaggi antichi* (Venice, 1621), p. 55. On Campanella, see L. Firpo, *Ricerche Campanelliane* (Florence, 1947); A. Corsano, *Tommaso Campanella* (Bari, 1961); J.M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton, N.J., 1997), especially ch. 4 and 5.

⁷⁹ Francesco Guiccardini, *Dialogo e discorso del reggimento di Firenze*, ed. R. Palmarocchi (Bari, 1932), p. 163: 'Però quando io ho detto di ammazzare o tenere prigionieri e' pisani, non ho forse parlato cristianamente, ma ho parlato secondo la ragione ed uso degli stati, né parlerà più cristianamente di me chi, rifiutata questa crudeltà, consiglierà che si faccia ogni sforzo di pigliare Pisa, che non vuole dire altro che essere causa di infiniti mali per occupare una cosa che secondo la coscienza, non è vostra.'

⁸⁰ Giovanni della Casa, *Orazione a Carlo Quinto Imperadore intorno alla restituzione della città di Piacenza* in *Opere di Baldassare Castiglione, Giovanni Della Casa, Benvenuto Cellini*, ed. C. Cordié (Milan, 1960), p. 479–80: 'In vano adunque si affaticano coloro, che fanno due ragioni; l'una torta e flasa, e dissoluta e disposta a rubare, e a mal fare; ed a questa han posto nome di Ragion di Stato; ed a lei assegnano il governo de' Reami, e degl'Imperi: e l'altra semplice e diritta e costante; e questa sgridano dalla cura, e dal reggimento delle Città e de' Regni: e caccianla a piatire e a contendere tra i litiganti.'

⁸¹ Antonio Scaino, *La Politica d'Aristotile ridotta in modo di parafrasi* (Rome, 1578): 'Et non solamente (il che è notissimo) si compiace Vostra Eccellenza, senza sentir travaglio di fatica alcuna, delle quotidiane cure, et attioni, nelle quali si trova involta; ma accompagnando etiam dio l'attioni con le speculationi,

pictured in stark contrast to reason of state, as Bishop Panfilo Persico (1571–1625) illustrated in his *Della filosofia morale e politica d'Aristotele* (*On the Moral and Political Philosophy of Aristotle*) of 1617.⁸² And, even then, not everyone agreed.

‘State,’ Botero wrote in his *Della ragion di stato*, ‘is a stable rule over a people and Reason of State is the knowledge of the means by which such a dominion may be founded, preserved and extended.’⁸³ However, ‘[c]learly it is a greater task to preserve a state, because human affairs wax and wane as if by a law of nature, like the moon to which they are subject.’⁸⁴ As Botero points out, ‘Aristotle was also of this opinion, for he says in his *Politics* that the principal task of the legislator is not to form and establish a city but to make provision for its long continuance’.⁸⁵ It is no surprise, then, to find Botero often mentioning Aristotle in his treatise, and in particular the analysis in Book 5 of the *Politics*.

Aristotle holds that those who are pre-eminent in wisdom and judgement are natural rulers, saying that nobles are to be honoured because nobility is a matter of blood and descent, and good parents are likely to have good offspring and better ones better offspring. For this reason tyrants fear good men more than bad ones and stout-hearted men more than spiritless ones, for those who are incapable and unworthy of the rank due to excellence have reason to fear those who are capable and worthy of it.⁸⁶

Botero’s words about religion are even more revealing: ‘Aristotle advises the tyrant to do his utmost to be thought pious, both so that his subjects with this opinion of him will not fear ill-

mostra chiaramente di sentir un grandissimo gusto de discorsi appartenenti alle ragioni di stato; quali, hora con la lettione delle historie, et d’altri autori, hora dalla viva voce d’huomini singolarissimi di giuditio, et peritissimi de governi humani, va gustando con acuire tutta via piu la perspicacita del bel ingengno, che il N[ostro] S[anto] Dio le ha donato.’

⁸² Panfilo Persico, *Della filosofia morale e politica d'Aristotele* (Venice, 1617), fol. B3v: ‘Onde hanno traviato tanto molti politici, che perciò sono tenuti huomini senza Dio confondendo l’humane con le divine cose, et facendo la religione, et la pietà subordinata alla ragion di regnare in modo barbaro, et tirannico. In che si discostano apertamente dalla dottrina d’Aristotele, il qual e’ insegna, che la politica deve servir alla religione, come la medicina alla sanità.’

⁸³ Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, ed. P.J. and D.P. Waley (London, 1956), 1.1. On Botero, see F. Chabod, *Giovanni Botero* (Rome, 1935); A.E. Baldini (ed.), *Botero e la ‘Ragion di Stato’: atti del Convegno in memoria di Luigi Firpo (Torino 8–10 marzo 1990)* (Florence, 1992); R. Descendre, *L’état du monde : Giovanni Botero entre raison d’état et géopolitique* (Geneva, 2009).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.5.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.5. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1273b28–1274b27.

⁸⁶ Botero, *The Reason of State*, 1.9. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1313a34–b32.

treatment at the hands of one who, as they suppose, fears the gods, and because they will hesitate to resist one whom they believe to be dear to the gods.’⁸⁷

Ludovico Settala (1550–1663) drew explicit parallels between Aristotle and reason of state in his *Della ragion di stato* (*On the Reason of State*) of 1627. He did so by linking Machiavelli’s prince to both species of tyranny described by Aristotle in Book 5 of the *Politics* and by later expounding on what Aristotle had said about reason of state.⁸⁸ He identified Aristotle’s second way of preserving tyrannies as true reason of state, intimating that all there is to know about reason of state could be found in Aristotle’s discussion of the dissolution of constitutions.⁸⁹ Later, in the second book of his *Della ragion di stato*, he extracted political maxims from the *Politics* before doing the same with other ancient and contemporary authors, such as Scipione Ammirato (1531–1601) and Botero. He also explored Paruta’s arguments for and against ostracism in Book 4. Yet, there is no doubt that Aristotle’s discussion of the means of preserving tyranny formed a central element of his theory of reason of state. The fifth book of Settala’s *Della ragion di stato* is essentially devoted to it and ends with a renewed emphasis on the second way of preserving tyranny in Book 5 of Aristotle’s *Politics*.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Botero, *The Reason of State*, 2.14. See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1314a30–1315a24.

⁸⁸ Ludovico Settala, *Della ragion di stato libri sette* (Milan, 1627), p. 1: ‘Molte volte frà me stesso son’andato pensando la causa, perche, essendo che in bocca d’ogni uno è questo nome di Ragion di Stato, e che tal cosa sia fatta per ragion di stato; così pochi siano arrivati alla cognitione vera della naura di quella, et in qual cosa stia propriamente la sua forma: anzi per lo più ciò tralasciando, tutto il loro pensiero hanno posto in cavar precetti, e massima circa tal materia dal Secretario Fiorentino, e dalle attioni di Tiberio scritte da Cornelio Tacito non avvertendo, che quello formando il suo Prencipe lo ammaestrò con precetti insegnati, e tolti da Aristot[ele] nel 5 della Politica, dove ci rappresenta le astutie, et accortezze de’ Tiranni, così della prima, come della seconda spetie per conservare se stessi, et il loro stato in quella forma.’

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 42–3: ‘Il Domino Regio è in tutto contrario al Tiranno; nel quinto libro della Politica, dove tratta di tutte le Ragioni di Stato, havendo da trattare del Tiranno, fattone due specie; una, cha all’aperta si scopre per tale, pessima, che con pessimi mezi procura di conservarsi, che per esser violenta non è durevole; l’altra, che pure hà il fine del Tiranno cioè il dominare à quelli, che non vorrebbero, honestando il male, e coprendolo con la veste del bene, e della virtù, camina con vie contrarie, et usando Regole, ò Massime opposte cerca imitando i buoni Rè di conservarsi... Il che farà l’ottimo Prencipe, e perfettamente otterrà il suo intento, quando si servirà di quelle regole, che haveva proposte per la seconda specie di Tirannide à buon fine; et userà regole in tutto contrarie à quelle della prima specie, che da noi ancora à suo luogo si proporranno: che perciò Arist[otele] parlando del Regno quasi ne dia le Regole della Ragion di Stato a lui conveniente, che Il Governo Regio all’hora si conserverà longamente, che si conterrà entro i termini della Mediocrità: e che anderà restringendo la somma autorità sua à meno cose, che sia possibile.’

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 203: ‘Finirò con Aristotele non potersi trovare, così ogni particolare avvertimento intorno questa materia; essendosi scoperto già per inanti, che lo scopo, al quale deve haver sempre fissi gli occhi il tiranno, è di sforzarsi di comparire nella Città à guisa di un buon padre di famiglia, e di un buon Rè, e come procuratore delle sostanze loro: e non come assoluto, e proprio padrone di esse: camminando per

Thus we come full circle to the relationship between Machiavelli and Aristotle, Machiavelli's impact on perceptions of Aristotle's political thought in the late Renaissance, and we are left with questions about the reception of Book 5 of the *Politics* in the reason of state tradition. The traditional narrative that reason of state signalled the end of Aristotelian political theory seems to be in dire need of revision. Furthermore, we are forced to recognise the importance of Aristotle's discussion of the dissolution of constitutions in sixteenth-century political discourse and may wonder about its centrality to early-modern Northern European political thought.

V. CONCLUSION

Aristotle's *Politics* was still read in the Renaissance; the vernacularisation of his political thought was not simply a cultural movement but a political act. Aristotle supplied a body of ideas that writers used either for propaganda or to make sense of recent events and contemporary politics. His political thought was aligned with or compared to authors such as Machiavelli and Bodin, and the analysis of the dissolution of constitutions in Book 5 of the *Politics* remained a useful guide on how to preserve the state and remoralise politics. It was employed by reason of state authors for precisely this purpose, that is to remoralise politics, but also to highlight the origins of reason of state theories. This invites us to revisit our understanding of the political theory of the Renaissance and in particular the idea that republicanism was the dominant ideology of the time and that Renaissance political thought owed a deeper debt to Rome. Thus we come to our conclusion.

la via di mezo, con fuggir gli estremi, ò gli eccessi, ammettendo alla sua conversatione i principali della Città; e trattando la plebe con certa maniera d'indulgenza, e di domesticheza, e libertà popolare.'

Conclusion

Aristotle's political ideas and in particular his discussion of the dissolution of constitutions proved central to late Renaissance political thought. The role of the *Politics* in establishing a new way of thinking about politics, the perceived influence of Aristotle's tyrant on Machiavelli's prince, the efforts to remoralise Aristotle in the wake of this relationship, the importance of Aristotelian political tenets in preserving republican liberty, and the plethora of vernacular commentaries on the *Politics* all suggest one thing: the political theory of the Renaissance owed as much debt to Rome as it did to Greece. We saw in chapter 6 how Ludovico Settala (1550–1633) drew links between Aristotle, Machiavelli, and reason of state in his *Della ragion di stato (On Reason of State)* of 1627 and how Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) made frequent references to Book 5 of the *Politics* in his *Della ragion di stato (On Reason of State)* of 1589. It is no coincidence that Antonio Scaino (1526–1616) mentioned the phrase *ragion di stato* (reason of state) in his *La Politica di Aristotele ridotta in modo di parafrasi (Aristotle's Politics Paraphrased)* of 1578. We saw in chapter 5 with Antonio Brucioli's (1498–1566) *Dialogi della moral filosofia (Dialogues on Moral Philosophy)* of 1526–45 how Aristotle's analysis of the dissolution of constitutions remained a useful guide on how to preserve the state. Republicanism and reason-of-state theory were not mutually exclusive as is often believed. We saw in chapter 4 Agostino Nifo's (1473–1545) reaction to the close parallel between Aristotle and Machiavelli in his *De regnandi peritia (On the Art of Governing)* of 1523. He chose to remoralise not just Machiavelli but Aristotle as well. We saw in chapter 3 how the similarities between Aristotle's analysis of the means of preserving tyrannies and Machiavelli's *The Prince* written in 1513 are striking and how they force us to rethink the purpose of Machiavelli's advice-book. Machiavelli's endorsement of the two means of preserving tyranny outlined by Aristotle suggests an attempt to remoralise the prince as well as inform him about how to maintain the state.

This reassessment, however, can only be carried out by expanding our concept of Aristotelianism to include Renaissance works that do not fit within a well-defined tradition or genre. Thinking of Aristotelianism as more of a complexion than as a tradition, that is as a colour visible under a new lens, enables us to look beyond Renaissance Aristotelian Latin or vernacular commentaries and translations to include authors whose works, like Giovanni Pontano's (1426–1503) *De magnanimitate* (*On Magnanimity*) of 1489, are sometime explicitly referred to as *Aristotelea* (Pontano's own word), but more often than not implicitly rather than explicitly owe a debt to Aristotle. Machiavelli's *The Prince* is emblematic. It would be wrong to characterise his advice-book as an Aristotelian text as the word currently stands, for it would force us to identify a common framework of shared beliefs or a way of thinking about politics that simply does not exist. But if we expand the concept of Aristotelianism to include even sporadic and unsystematic overlapping but not necessarily underlying ideas we bypass these constraints and find ourselves in a better position to examine the similarities between Aristotle and Machiavelli and make a more informed claim about the influence Aristotle's political thought in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. By expanding the concept we are also able to take into account the full range of political ideas and theories postulated by Aristotle and not just concentrate on crucial beliefs about human nature, justice, freedom, and equality. While these concepts are undoubtedly important, they must not be focused on so narrowly as to ignore other aspects of his political theory, such as Aristotle's discussion of the means of preserving the state and its relevance to early-modern and contemporary political theory. The role of fear in preserving a constitution and the idea of conspiracies by fanatics as the ultimate threat to the state resonate strongly in our post-9/11 world. This, however, entails moving beyond the idea that all political discourse is inherently and resolutely charged ideologically. As I wrote in the Introduction, I believe political actors do not always think purely in terms of ideologies but in terms of policies aimed at preserving the state and its citizens' well-being. This means that sometime people agree with a course of action that comes into direct tension with what they believe. Future studies would benefit from broadening their concerns to incorporate these less known elements of Aristotle's

political thought. In particular, they might wish to explore the influence of these elements on the rise of reason of state.

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