

SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

MACHIAVELLI IN MODERNITY:

*THE PRINCE'S* CONTINUED RELEVANCY AS REFLECTED IN THE FALL OF  
IMPERIAL RUSSIA

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PREVIEW

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my community of friends and family whose support allowed me to express the uniqueness of my distinction.

PREVIEW

## ABSTRACT

Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* has sparked controversy and debate since its release in the 16th century. Among the mixed reviews of his treatise, Machiavelli is classified as either the father of modern political thought or a benefactor to tyrants. By avoiding the reduction of his theoretical legacy to simplistic Machiavellianism, this project contends that *The Prince* postulates a perceptive analysis of the methods needed to maintain a state by promoting a universal and timeless portrayal of statecraft. In defense of this argument, *The Prince's* critical insight will be juxtaposed with the circumstances surrounding the disintegration of Imperial Russia to illustrate the theoretical and pragmatic utility of Machiavellian principles within the modern world.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Philosophical Connections

In constructing an argument for *The Prince*'s continued relevancy, an evaluation of the philosophical offerings of the ancients illustrates the differentiation in Machiavelli's theories from the established traditional order. In addition, a consideration of the writings of philosophers classified as modern allows for an analysis of Machiavelli's modern leanings. To conduct such an assessment, this study began with a thorough examination of Machiavelli's *The Prince* to fully explore its hypothesized arguments. As reflected in the work, *The Prince* constructs a pathway of power dedicated for a prince who seeks to gain and maintain rule. Within the text, Machiavelli pivoted away from the traditional philosophical frameworks of the ancients, which advised a leader to seek good pathways, and instead he introduced what he deemed a more realistic proposal for success. These characteristics, associated with a prince's natural abilities in both fighting prowess and political strategizing, and the use of appearances in creating a public persona of power, laid the framework of this analysis.

To understand Machiavelli's break with the past, an understanding on both the work of Plato and Aristotle were relevant to this review as their respective considerations of governmental considerations vary with the postulations presented in *The Prince*. As Alan Bloom's translation of Plato's *The Republic* illustrates, Plato presented a theoretical political structure viewed by him as ideal. In unveiling his argument, Plato reveals his plan through a conversation between Socrates and various Athenians. Similarly, Carnes Lord's translation of *The Politics* represents Aristotle's theories on political formation. As Aristotle proposes, man is a social creature and in coming together to create society must then participate in the political

activity carried out through the capacity for thought and speech. These works both highlight a sampling of the ancients' considerations on political philosophy and were utilized as a means of contrast with the approach presented within *The Prince* as they supported their premises in idealized hypothetical considerations in contrast to Machiavelli's approach, which utilized factual historical data.

In searching for a modern connection, the work of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke was explored to see if a correlation between their work and *The Prince* could be established. Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* was selected for its presentation of the Enlightenment perspective on political thought. Within the volume, Hobbes introduced the concept of the "state of nature." In this theory, he pondered the natural state of man when government structures are not in place to rule and thus regulate societal interaction. In his analysis, he argued that men seek power to obtain their desires and to avoid that which they hate. In doing so, the continual struggle for power establishes a foundation of conflict between men as their individual wants overlap. According to Hobbes, these disputes leave society in a never-ending state of flux requiring a larger state intervention, coined a leviathan, to keep the peace. The second treatise of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* was selected as it builds upon Hobbes "state of nature." While Locke varies from Hobbes' work, postulating the idea of humankind's overall ability to rule themselves, Locke also touches on the role of private property in the establishment of governmental boundaries. These books were utilized within this study to highlight *The Prince's* consideration of modern concepts, as reflected in the universal consideration of private property.

## A Definition of Modernity and Economic Considerations

When assessing *The Prince's* connection within modernity, a consideration of what it means to be modern was important to this analysis. *Machiavelli's Virtue* presents Harvey Mansfield's reflections on Machiavelli's continued value to the world. Within it, he explored the problems associated with a classification of modern, as according to him, the term is a fleeting designation. This is because declarations of being modern quickly become what Harvey categorized as traditional, or non-modern, with the passing of time. His considerations on the effects of assigning a modern label and the associations related to this action were incorporated into this study as it evaluated Machiavelli's continued relevance within modernity.

Expounding on the designation of modern from a timeline perspective, *Marshall Berman's All That is Solid Melts into Air*, along with Peter Osborne's *Modernity is a Qualitative Not a Chronological, Category*, which reflects upon Berman's work, a chronological historical classification of the phases of modernity is offered to present the issues that arise in examining modernity from a sequential perspective. Both premises were reviewed as they pertain to Machiavelli's place within modern declarations.

Beyond the timeline of modernity, the concept of industrialization, and its impact on state formation, was also examined in relation to *The Prince*. W. W. Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth* introduces a historical model of economic growth that was initially received as groundbreaking, influencing public policy within many Western countries. This work was examined for its connection to the impact of industrialization on governmental stability and Machiavelli's lack of consideration on the topic. In contrast to Rostow's work, Barrington Moore Jr.'s *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* examines industrialization and the pathway of various governmental formations but rejects Rostow's approach to modernization as



Moore argues that it does not account for pathways that do not result in a capitalist structure. The importance of this text to this examination is its counter position on the role of industrialization and governmental formation within modernity. In effort of bridging the gap felt by *The Prince*'s lack of considerations on industrialization, John Wilkinson's translation of Jacques Ellul's *Ideas of Technology: The Technological Order* and *The Technological Society* was utilized given its description of Ellul's thoughts on the influence of technology upon society as a driving force for societal structure and formation. Within the works, Ellul establishes the authoritative measures that arise from technological innovation. In arguing for the relevance of *The Prince* within modern times, this study employed Ellul's work to illustrate how Machiavelli's advice contains an important message for technological security and the autocratic measures surrounding such measures.

While the origination of *The Prince* is placed between the timeframe of the ancients and the philosophers of the Enlightenment period it is important to consider Machiavelli's connection to the Italian Renaissance as it highlights his break with the old and closer connection to the modern era. As Melanie Hunt emphasized in her Master Thesis, *Machiavelli and Myth, The Prince* is true depiction of the thoughts of this era. As encapsulated in the Renaissance, humanistic principles were revised after the many years of religious contemplation associated with the philosophical considerations of the Middle Ages. This reconnection to the works of the ancients could be associated with turning back in time rather than forward, and yet in Machiavelli's disassociation with the traditional practices focusing on the ethics of government he was able to create a new approach concerning state formation, setting himself apart. As detailed in Rafael Del Aguila's *Machiavelli's Theory of Political Action: Tragedy, Iron and Choice*, Machiavelli focused on action involved in political matters establishing himself as more

an “architect” or “engineer” removing the need for the ethical motivation of being “good.”

These works highlight the connection of *The Prince* to Renaissance but also stipulate the originality of Machiavelli in breaking with the ethical component of government relations favored by the ancients.

Machiavelli’s unique approach is also detailed in the debate over his place as the originator of modern political philosophy. Although not a direct focus of this study, readings on this debate were explored as a means of emphasizing *The Prince*’s closer association with the modern over the past.

### **Societal Influence**

*The Prince*’s link to modernity was further examined by pondering the philosophical considerations regarding Machiavelli ability to write and society’s influence upon the theories posited within *The Prince*. Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition* presents her theories regarding the role of action within the public sphere. She argues that politics develops out of the foundation of society and community development allows for individual innovation. These theories depict the importance of a person’s uniqueness, which is developed only through the safety gained by communal interaction, to reflect on Machiavelli’s ability to write *The Prince*. Martin Heidegger’s *Question Concerning Technology* highlights his theories on technology and its overall societal impact. In the text, Heidegger discusses the “revealment” process which was utilized for this study as it relates to Machiavelli’s capability to write *The Prince*, given his ability to obtain a state of meditative thought.

Furthering the societal connection, the essay “Technological Determinism in American Culture,” illustrates Merritt Roe Smith’s depiction of the historical evolution of the theory of technological determinism and its embedment within American Culture. Within the work, Smith

reiterates the overall definition of the term and clarifies the two camps of hard and soft views on the topic. As technological determinism theorizes, technology drives societal change. Within the soft view, society has a role in shaping technology as it evolves whereas in the hard view, it does not, as technology is its own driving force. For the purpose of this study, this work was utilized in consideration of *The Prince's* origination. From Smith's work, the study accepts a soft view as it postulates the societal influence upon the creation and influence of Machiavelli's text.

### **The Life and Times of Nicholas II**

The focus of this study was to conduct a Machiavellian analysis of Nicholas II's reign to argue that *The Prince's* ruminations are relevant to modern times. In doing so, literature regarding Nicholas II's upbringing, education, natural tendencies, and state appearance activities were explored.

In highlighting Tsar Nicholas II's education and younger years, Miranda Carter's *George, Nicholas, and Wilhelm: Three Royal Cousins and the Road to World War I* depicts the history of the three royal cousins that ruled over the British empire, Germany, and Russia in Europe's final dynastic days. The book details events from their childhood up through the tragic times of the first World War. While the author highlights details regarding all three rulers, for the purpose of this review, much attention was focused upon the facts provided on Tsar Nicholas II, gleaned insight into his educational pursuits and practices.

In further examination of Tsar Nicholas II's formative years, *Nicholas II: The Interrupted Transition* by Helene Carrere d'Encausse captures the younger days of the Tsar and highlights his upbringing and education under the mantle of a Romanov king. While the author argues that Tsar Nicholas II's links to history are what prevented him from adapting to the needs

of an evolving Russia, it was the details on his educational practices and insight into his tutors' beliefs that served for the needs of this study.

Many scholars have examined and explored the Romanov family. Their history is captured in the legacy of their 300+ year dynasty. Notably, Virginia Cowles's *The Romanovs* depicts the lives of the best-known Romanovs during the family's reign and details the events and characteristics of its most prominent members. While facts were gleaned from the entire work, as the historical events that impacted Tsar Nicholas II's reign, much attention was given to her discussion of Tsar Nicholas II's story, specifically as it provided a backdrop to the Tsar's actions and beliefs.

Adding to the descriptions of Tsar Nicholas's life and times, *The Private World of the Last Tsar* contains the photographs and notes of General Count Alexander Grabbe during his association with the Tsar and the royal family during the last years of the Russian monarchy. Published by Grabbe's son and daughter-in-law after Alexander Grabbe's death, this collection of more than 200 photographs of the Tsar and his family is the only publication of Tsar photographs taken by one individual. The text provided first-hand accounts and images of Tsar Nicholas II utilized in depicting his nature for the purpose of this review.

Detailing the pageantry and ceremonies of the royal court in its final years, Greg King's *The Court of the Last Tsar: Pomp, Power, and Pageantry in the Reign of Nicholas II* illustrates the events and lifestyles of the royals in the decades leading up to the collapse of Imperial Russia. The book reflects the opulent nature of the Romanovs and depicts the grand religious pageantry utilized by the royal family. These facts and first-hand accounts were utilized by the study in its comparison of *The Prince's* views on religion and liberality to that of Tsar Nicholas II's actions in his final days.

## War and Revolution

Nicholas II faced two significant wars during his time as Tsar. The first was the Russo-Japanese War and the second was the World War I. Both events aided in the revolutionary feelings growing within the boundaries of Russia, eroding the Tsar's absolute power over the nation and ultimately leading to his abdication.

As Bruce Menning argues in *Miscalculating One's Enemies: Russian Military Intelligence Before the Russo-Japanese War* the Russian loss in the Russo-Japanese war is attributed largely to a miscalculation of Japanese readiness and poor military intelligence received by Russian officials. Adding to the issues associated with the Russian loss, Joel Hamby suggests in *Striking the Balance: Strategy and Force in the Russo-Japanese War* that the Russians never held a strong interest in the war. Both works provided a backdrop for the tensions arising from the Russo-Japanese War.

World War I further destabilized the political climate of Imperial Russia. The works of Grabbe and Cowles, as discussed above, provide insight into this timeframe as Grabbe pointed that the Tsar's frequent visits to the troops created a strain on the war department, as security had to be arranged. In addition, as Cowles suggests Nicholas II's decision to link himself directly to the military afforded him direct fault for military failures inspiring the peasants to lose faith in their Tsar.

The Russia Revolution of 1917 was the final blow to Imperial Russia leading to Tsar Nicholas II's abdication and the fall of the state. The origins of the event are connected to the political occurrences detailed in the decades preceding the collapse. While Orlando Figs has written many books on Russian history, in *A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution* and *Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991: A History*, he captures the events of the

revolution, tracing its roots to the 19th century rather than solely identifying the political climate leading up to the 1917 Revolution. In the text, he highlights Tsar Nicholas II's dislike of political and economic studies during his education leading to his inability to grasp large social concerns impacting Russia. His description of the Khodynka Tragedy also provided insight for this study as the event had a lasting effect on Tsar Nicholas II's legacy.

No examination of the final days of Imperial Russia would be complete without some mention of Girgorii Rasputin. Alex DeJonge's *The Life and Times of Girgorii Rasputin* provides a detailed biography of Girgorii Rasputin, a Russian mystic and advisor to the Romanov family. While Rasputin was not a direct focus of this study, his influence over the Tsar and Tsarina are discussed as it relates to the Tsar's public persona and the damage caused to the ruler's image in his final days.

## INTRODUCTION

We shall not shock anyone, we shall merely expose ourselves to good-natured or at any rate harmless ridicule if we profess ourselves inclined to the old-fashioned and simple opinion according to which Machiavelli was a teacher of evil.

-- Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*<sup>1</sup>

Thesis question: *Do The Prince's assertions hold value in an examination of modern realms?*

Hypothesis: A case for *The Prince's* relevancy within modernity can be established by evaluating Machiavelli's postulations in relation to specific historical events from the contemporary age.

Machiavelli has clearly been established as a dominant member in the field of power studies. His theories and assertions, detailed in his book *The Prince*, created a playbook regarding the way in which rulers can both conquer and control either a new or existing principalities. Within the work, a description of the needed characteristics of a successful prince is explored, as a means of making a recommendation on how to rule a populace. The work introduces sound arguments for ways to retain governmental control, built upon the discussion of historic events that seemingly support Machiavelli's points. Although the image he presents has been classified as harsh and ruthless, his theories have been explored and debated and enlisted throughout the ages.

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1978) Page 9.

Almost in contrast to Machiavelli's proposed prince, the actions of Tsar Nicholas II during his reign seemingly conflict with *The Prince's* postulations. As the last tsar, and head of Imperial Russia, his reign presents a legitimate model for understanding the actions that contribute to the collapse of an empire. Clearly the Tsar acted in some ways that aligned with *The Prince's* suggestions, but the monarch never truly committed to the role of Machiavelli's natural prince. Although much research has been undertaken about Machiavelli and other research has analyzed the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, a direct study illustrating an application of Machiavellian principles to the Romanov reign has not been conducted. Whether Nicholas II's reign, and ultimately his life, could have been saved if he had followed established Machiavellian guidelines is a matter of conjecture, but Machiavelli's warnings for a prince, and the consequences of a prince's actions, are indeed reflected in the collapse of the last Tsar of Russia. A study such as this emphasizes the continued relevance of Machiavelli's advice, but more importantly analyzes the need for an understanding of Machiavellian power structures.

### **The Humanities Perspective**

Throughout the Salve Regina doctoral program, the question has been raised as to how a study of the humanities impacts the world. As illustrated in this program, the power of the written word, as a mode of technology, has a direct influence on society. This is because in either their acceptance, or rejection, proposed theories alter the thinking of the status quo, and thus shape the ever-evolving humanist timeline.

In turning to the writings of Machiavelli, and by acknowledging their importance within a study of a real-world application, such as the collapse of the Romanov dynasty, a case is established depicting the validity of philosophical writings as they provide insight into matters of



states and reflect a direct link to potential historic outcomes. This correlation thus establishes the need for an understanding of humanistic works by world leaders.

### **Statement of Originality and Contribution to Discipline**

As seen in the literature review of this topic, no distinct study has been conducted analyzing a Machiavellian approach to Nicholas II's reign. This is possibly due to the nature of strict disciplinary focuses within academia. In looking at Machiavelli, a student would most likely be positioned within the realm of political philosophy or political science, whereas a student of historical studies would most likely be drawn to the life and times of Nicholas II. This project offers the perspective of cross-disciplinary inquiry. In integrating various disciplines, the broader humanistic approach can be fruitfully applied, thus validating the need for a transformative multi-disciplinarity approach as the words captured within Machiavelli's work elegantly embody the synthesis of philosophy, society, and history, yielding a pragmatic approach to political studies.

Beyond strengthening the argument for cross-disciplinary curricula, this study also aims to support the broader claim that an understanding of the humanities is a necessity for members within ruling governments. Although directed at an authoritarian monarchical structure, Machiavelli's advice goes deeper than this primary audience. Beyond the guidance provided for princes, *The Prince* represents a study of human nature and its motivations. In linking Machiavelli's points to a specific timeframe in history, and thus analyzing the validity of his statements, an intersection of a philosophical doctrine and daily life emerges. This connection illustrates the close nature of humanistic studies with that of political operations, thus reinforcing the importance of the humanities to the complexities of state governance.

## Structure of Paper

In asserting the pertinence of *The Prince* within modernity, a three-part approach was applied.

Part I, *Matters of Modernity*, addresses the disconnect between *The Prince* and contemporary ideas within the era of its origination. Given the text's pre-modern origination, an early 16<sup>th</sup> century treatise may not seem to have immediate applicability to modern historical context, requiring this study to bridge the philosophical gap presented by the division between ancient and modern thought. In doing so, *The Prince's* reception throughout the ages is presented to affirm its relevancy to modern contexts. Beyond the cultural awareness attributed consigned to the work, an analysis of *The Prince's* modern leaning is postulated to highlight Machiavelli's futurist concepts. The philosophy surrounding the role of private property is analyzed to provide a benchmark of political thought from ancient to modern deliberations. The role of technology is also explored in connection with evolving economic and political structures triggered by the Industrial Revolution, the communal theory associated with technological determinism, and Ellul's considerations of technology's authoritative needs. This constellation centers *The Prince's* arguments in work with modern applications in a universe agglomeration is collocated with *The Prince's* arguments to further link the work with modern applications.

Once the foundation for *The Prince's* relevance to modern thought was established in Part I, the groundwork for the historical analysis was introduced. Parts II and III of this study initiate the union between the actual events of Tsar Nicholas II's reign and *The Prince's* postulations. These parts are divided between an examination of the Tsar's more internalized leadership traits (Part II) and the actions displayed through the leader's public persona (Part III). In highlighting the traits of a natural prince, as depicted by *The Prince*, a unification between a

hereditary and new prince is presented to cement the validity of the application of Tsar Nicholas II's reign to Machiavelli's work. Once this conjugation is achieved, a preliminary examination of Tsar Nicholas II's natural princely characteristics was compared with Machiavelli's submissions. Such a juxtaposition utilizes *The Prince's* theories regarding a prince's "ordinary industry" to rule. In this examination, Tsar Nicholas II's education is considered to explore his ability for political dexterity, as well as to analyze his natural tendencies to depict their disparity to *The Prince's* theories on the ordinary industry of a prince. Next *The Prince's* illustration of extraordinary and excessive measures is considered to introduce the impact of events falling outside of Tsar Nicholas II's direct influence, to reinforce Machiavelli's warnings for such occurrences. Lastly, Part I analyzes *The Prince's* theories on military planning and acts of war, as they reiterate additional considerations regarding the ordinary industry needed by a natural prince and the impact of extraordinary and excessive measures. The parallels drawn between Tsar Nicholas II and *The Prince's* admonitions in light of a prince's natural ruling abilities are employed to illustrate the text's continued relevance.

In turning to Part III of the study, a comparison of *The Prince's* recommendations for the prince's public persona to that of the actions of Tsar Nicholas II is presented to underline the continued pertinence of the book's instruction. As *The Prince* emphasizes a prince's outward devotion to religion, tendency for parsimony over liberality, and the management of feelings of fear, love, over those of hate are tools in the prince's arsenal of control. It is for this reason these three themes are juxtaposed with the actions of Tsar Nicholas II to illustrate the staying power of *The Prince's* ruminations, as they were never fully employed by the Tsar. This disconnect of the Tsar's actions from the recommendations within *The Prince* helps to illustrate the text's validity, if only by highlighting how a lack of their use does not work by means of historical analysis.

## PART I

### Matters of Modernity: *The Prince's Relevancy Within Modernity*

*I believe Machiavelli's Prince to be the statesman's supreme guide. The question may be asked: After a lapse of four centuries, does life remain in that great work the Prince? Is it possible that Machiavelli's advice may still be of some use to modern statesmen? Is the value of the political system given in the Prince limited to the period during which the book was written? Is it out of date, or is it universal and everlasting? My answer is that Machiavelli's doctrine is alive today even more than four centuries ago.*

*--Mussolini 1924<sup>1</sup>*

The extensive and ongoing dialogue regarding Machiavelli's *The Prince*, and its place in the cultural landscape of modern society, is well established. The term "Machiavellian" in the vernacular, however misused or misapplied, speaks to the influence of *The Prince* throughout history. Even after five centuries, the book continues to be examined, questioned, analyzed, reinterpreted, and applied by scholars working in diverse disciplines and by business professionals translating its content for popular consumption. However, the steadfast nature of these inquiries does not alone denote a direct link to modern affairs. While modern leaders have been known to reference the work, as depicted in the Mussolini quotation in this chapter's epigraph, such a citation does not validate Machiavelli's theories beyond one's personal knowledge. Allusions such as these reflect knowledge of the text, but they do not indicate that the principles expounded in *The Prince* still hold value and applicability in the modern age. Influence and indebtedness are questionable constructs. Although the overall aspiration of this study is to assert the continued relevancy of *The Prince* through the lens of historical analysis, it

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<sup>1</sup>Norman Wilde, "Machiavelli," *International Journal of Ethics* 38, no. 2 (January 1928): 212.

is important to first introduce some key components regarding the work to afford a foundation for this subsequent argument. To do this, a consideration of *The Prince's* reception throughout the centuries, without the confines of a specific historic event or political context, is warranted to provide the backdrop of the book's entrenchment within society. In doing so, this chapter explores the reception of *The Prince* since its introduction. Beyond this, in making a claim of relevancy to modernity, a discussion regarding the philosophical concerns of a modern designation is merited. Considerations of what the term modern means and how to chronologize such classifications are presented to clarify this study's argument. Once this theoretical topic is assessed, an analysis of *The Prince's* modern leanings is postulated to establish a link between the text and modern philosophical concepts. While these connections furnish a basis for an argument concerning *The Prince's* relevancy within modernity, they do not consider the concept of industrialization, which has been assigned by modern thinkers as consideration of modern states. To address this concern, an exploration of modernization theory is presented to demonstrate *The Prince's* association with the suppositions of modern scholars. Such a consideration establishes a link to modernity that is furthered by an examination of the principles associated with the intersection of society, technology, and state formation. In highlighting this juncture, the amalgamation of technology and authoritative regimes is explored. These illustrations will demonstrate *The Prince's* entrenchment in culture and society and introduce the contextual framework to fortify a position of the text's continued significance to modern state affairs that aligns with Machiavelli's own skeptical epistemology and *Weltanschauung*.

### **Relevancy by Means of Currency**

In making a case for *The Prince's* continued relevance, it is important to first explore how the text enmeshed itself within society, as continued societal awareness speaks to the

pertinent nature of the work, even if it does not constitute an actual validation of the ideas held within it. By reviewing the work's reception over time and in considering its influential advice, the groundwork of relevancy through acceptance, in both its positive and negative connotations, is established. Such an exploration substantiates the humanistic undertones of this study, as there can be "no external position of certainty" and "no universal understanding" outside the realm of "history and society," and that premise establishes the foundations of the text's lasting significance.<sup>2</sup>

*The Prince's* reception throughout the centuries has been mixed, and the controversy over the text began even before it was published. Although a statesman for many years, with the return of the Medici family to power, Machiavelli fell out of favor. During this exile from politics, Machiavelli wrote a majority of his works, including *The Prince*. While it can be debated that *The Prince* was Machiavelli's attempt to resume his standing and position within government, as a type of scripted resume, ultimately, the work was not officially released until five years after his death. For the most part, the common belief behind this delay is that a close friend, Francesco Vettori, advised Machiavelli to put the work aside, for fear its ideas might cause further animosity with the ruling family.<sup>3</sup> Vettori believed that the "frank apologia for double-dealing and the divorce of politics from ethics" illustrated within the book "would only have played into the hands of the enemies of the Medici regime."<sup>4</sup> Machiavelli took his friend's advice to heart and did not present *The Prince*, as he had planned, to the court.

Although the text was not published until after Machiavelli's death, copies of the book's

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<sup>2</sup>Michael Foucault. *The foucault reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ross King. 2007. *Machiavelli: Philosopher of power*. Eminent Lives. New York: Harper Collins Publisher), 160.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

manuscripts were viewed by the public, after Machiavelli shared his work with Lorenzo de' Medici, in whom he dedicated the book, fulfilling Vettori's prophesy of polemical reactions. Despite this early commotion, *The Prince* was eventually printed in Rome with the approval of Pope Clement VII. Although it gained initial success, with the rise of an anti-Machiavellian movement in the mid-sixteenth century, the book quickly lost its appeal among the public.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, during this time, Pope Paul IV placed the text on the papal index of prohibited books.<sup>6</sup> This decision to ban the book was upheld by a ruling of The Council of Trent in 1563.<sup>7</sup> With this designation, Machiavelli became the "near-mythical embodiment of evil," causing his name to be "synonymous with hypocrisy and atheism."<sup>8</sup>

Adding to the Church's condemnation of the text was the uncomplimentary commentary of Innocent Gentillet, the author of *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner et maintenir en bonne paix un royaume ou autre Principaut : Contre Nicolas Machiavel florentin*. Influenced largely by his own religious persecutions under the reign of Catherine de-Medici, the daughter of the Medici duke to whom *The Prince* is dedicated, Gentillet presented *The Prince* as the "poisonous portrait" that has come to be associated with Machiavellism.<sup>9</sup> Many have debated Gentillet's influence on the modern understanding of *The Prince*. Since his commentary was published in English in 1602 before *The Prince* had been translated into English in 1640, some

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<sup>5</sup>Jacob Soll, "The Reception of *The Prince* 1513-1700, or Why We Understand Machiavelli the Way We Do," *Social Research* 81, no. 1 (Spring 2014), 31.

<sup>6</sup>Carlo Celli, *The Essence of Machiavelli's The Prince*. (Axios Press, 2011), Location 68.

<sup>7</sup>Frederic Carroll and Carole Makeig Carroll, "Machiavelli: Priest to the Princes," *Social Science* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1972), 96.

<sup>8</sup>King, *Machiavelli*, 232.

<sup>9</sup>Philip Bobbitt, *The Garments of Court and Palace: Machiavelli and the World that He Made*. (New York: Grove Press, 2013) 10.

scholars have theorized that the Western image of “Machiavellian” was an evolution of Gentillet’s depiction rather than an accurate assessment of the original piece.<sup>10</sup> The flaw in this assumption is that it presumes that these translations were English speakers’ first interactions with Machiavellian ideas, and this is not really the case, as there were various editions of these works “in Italian, French and Latin in English libraries,” and a “reading knowledge of Italian was available to many people.”<sup>11</sup> Deciding whether Gentillet’s early depiction accounts for the modern characterization of Machiavelli or remains simply a “classic presentation of the perversion” that already surrounded *The Prince* is a matter of debate and is not the focus of this study; regardless, evidence exists that the “stereotype probably began, as...a popular misunderstanding of Machiavelli, and was aided by attacks from the Church, both Catholic and Protestant.”<sup>12</sup> In fact, the association of Machiavelli’s name with that of the Devil was a byproduct of the fusion between the Church and state during this time.<sup>13</sup> Whatever the case, in discussing *The Prince*, Gentillet continued the examination of Machiavelli’s work, keeping the name, and in some ways the myth, in the foreground of cultural consciousness.

Outside of the considerations of Gentillet’s impact on the Machiavellian image, Machiavelli’s name has been associated with many historic barbarities. When Gentillet’s work was translated into Italian, a year after its original release in French, a foreword was added to the piece by another contemporary writer “warning the English against Machiavellian ideas,” claiming that Machiavelli’s theories had “been responsible for the oppression of Protestants in

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>12</sup>Irving Ribner, “Marlowe and Machiavelli,” *Comparative Literature* 6, no. 4 (Autumn 1954), 349.

<sup>13</sup>Carroll and Carroll, *Machiavelli: Priest to the Princes*, 96.