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Liberty and Empire in Florentine Renaissance Republicanism: from Salutati to Machiavelli

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Professor Peter James Stacey, Chair

This doctoral dissertation is concerned with a body of Renaissance republican thinking about empire that developed in Italy between c. 1375 and c. 1515. It shows that Renaissance humanists—intellectuals dedicated to restoring the cultural products of Greco-Roman antiquity––drew from Roman sources a conceptual apparatus with which they described the Florentine Republic's subjection of neighbouring peoples in terms that avoided the idea of slavery. I argue that of particular importance to this humanist ideological project was the Roman concept of the imperial protectorate: a vision of an empire formed between a patron state and its dependent, yet free, clients. Moreover, I find that Florentine humanists claimed that their republic could liberate foreign peoples from servitude, and thus export to them an accommodated version of republican

freedom. After examining these earlier humanist approaches, this dissertation brings to light a radically divergent Renaissance conception of empire: Machiavelli's theory of the imperial republic. I demonstrate that Machiavelli reappraises his humanist predecessors' assumptions to produce a theory of empire which accepts that imperial rule almost invariably involves the domination and enslavement of foreign subjects. Altogether, this dissertation reveals that the Italian Renaissance transmits not only a range of Roman notions of empire as revived by early Florentine humanism, but also Machiavelli's revisionist theory. This dual Renaissance legacy has implications for how we study later theorists who were heirs to the same problem of reconciling liberty and empire.

The dissertation of Adam Woodhouse Mowl is approved.

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I hold a BA in Ancient and Modern History from the University of Oxford, Corpus Christi College and an MA in the History of Political Thought and Intellectual History from the University of London. I have been a visiting fellow at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and will soon be taking up a Harper-Schmidt fellowship in the Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts at the University of Chicago. My work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* and the *Journal of the History of Ideas*.

Introduction

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

When historians look for the origins of post-classical republicanism, they rightly turn to the city-states of late medieval and early Renaissance Italy. None of these states has been more closely associated with the republican tradition than Florence. Yet the Florentine contribution to republican thought has been both simplified and, more troublingly, sanitized. While creating in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a territorial state in Tuscany, Florence absorbed into its expanding domains—sometimes by purchase, sometimes through conquest—other, formerly independent, republics. This imperial process inevitably engendered a profound ideological problem: how could Florence justify subjecting to its imperial rule neighbouring peoples who had their own proud histories of republican liberty?

This doctoral dissertation offers some answers to this question. In doing so, it examines the Renaissance recovery of a set of classical Roman arguments and concepts that were used to help fashion the intellectual construct that J. G. A. Pocock has called the "imperial republic."[1] Pocock's more recent work is part of a new seam of historiography which has exposed the omission or marginalization of empire in earlier studies of Renaissance republicanism, including

[1] J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 3, *The First Decline and Fall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 203–35.

those of Hans Baron and Quentin Skinner, the two dominant figures in the post-war literature.[2] Pocock and other intellectual historians, such as Mikael Hörnqvist and David Armitage, are now demonstrating the extent to which the development of early modern republicanism, in its varying ideological forms and contextual settings, was conditioned by imperial concerns. That republicanism and empire should be conceptually intertwined in this period—or in fact in any other—should come as no surprise. For obvious linguistic and conceptual reasons, we must begin our genealogies of republican thought, not with the notionally self-sufficient Greek *polis*, but with the explicitly expansionist Roman *res publica*. Moreover, it is important to note that the concept of *imperium*—the power of command held by a Roman magistrate or, in a later semantic development, the geographical area in which such power was exercised—was itself a Roman Republican invention.[3]

The revival of a markedly imperial form of republicanism is nowhere more conspicuous in the Renaissance than in Florentine humanist political thought, from its earliest and explicitly neo-Roman incarnation in the works of Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni at the turn of the fourteenth century, up to Machiavelli's theory of republican empire at the opening of the sixteenth. Over this long century, Florentine humanism was grappling with a series of issues of imperial governance which had been long in the making. Indeed, if we want to trace the origins of Florence's imperial republicanism then we will need to go back as far as the twelfth century, and thus to the very beginnings of the Florentine commune. For once Florence had in practice

[2] I describe in detail these historiographical developments and list the relevant bibliography in the following section.

[3] For the definition of *imperium*, see John Richardson, *The Language of Empire. Rome and the Idea of Empire from the Third Century BC to the Second Century AD* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

succeeded in freeing itself from the jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Emperors to emerge as an independent political entity, it would begin the slow process of cultivating its own imperial space.[4] This dissertation does not deal with the older medieval claims of imperial overlordship advanced in the *regnum Italicum* by the Holy Roman Emperors and their advocates. These claims have already been studied extensively.[5] Moreover, since they were designed to appeal to an audience broadly sympathetic to the idea of universal monarchy, they belong to a very different current of thought from the one under investigation here. My focus instead is on the emergence from this political context of a distinctive and in many ways antithetical imperial ideology, and one that was presented in a novel idiom: the neo-classical language of Petrarchan humanism. That is to say I am concerned with the means by which the humanist supporters of a republican state attempted to legitimate its imperial activity within an intellectual climate which for well over a millennium had subsumed the concept of empire under that of monarchy. I do not mean to suggest, of course, that all Florentine humanists were unwaveringly hostile to the emperors and their various interventions in the Italian peninsula's politics; some of the most prominent humanists attached to the Florentine chancery, such as Salutati himself, could combine local republican commitments with support for what Alexander Lee has recently

[4] Daniel Waley in his still authoritative study associates the beginnings of independent communal government with the presence of consuls, which Florence had from 1138. Daniel Waley and Trevor Dean, *The Italian City-Republics* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013) (first published 1969), 31–35.

[5] This is a very large bibliography indeed, but key studies of the post-war period include: Walter Ullmann, "The Development of the Medieval Idea of Sovereignty," *English Historical Review* 64/250 (1949): 1–33; Janet Nelson, "Kingship and Empire," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350–c. 1450*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 211–51; Kenneth Pennington, *The Prince and the Law, 1200–1600. Sovereignty and Rights in the Western Legal Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

referred to as "the imperial ideal."[6] Nonetheless, this dissertation shows that Florentine humanism would soon come to sustain an imperial ideology of its own which effectively supplanted the figure of the emperor altogether.

This development in Florentine political thought reflected profound changes in the republic's standing in the foreign arena. In its external policy, the early Florentine commune was largely preoccupied with evading the juridical and military reach of the emperors, contesting the power of local *signori*, and managing its relationship with the papacy. From the Trecento onwards, however, Florence would have reason to be less anxious about asserting its autonomy; instead, it would increasingly need to confront the problem of its own expanding political influence encroaching on the independence of other peoples and states. The literature on Florence's evolution from medieval commune to early modern territorial state has exposed a complicated knot of institutional and legal issues,[7] but my focus is on an attendant ideological problem. During the second half of the fourteenth century and the first decades of the fifteenth,

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[6] Alexander Lee, *Humanism and Empire: The Imperial Ideal in Fourteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[7] This constitutes a substantial body of Italian scholarship. The studies of Giorgio Chittolini, Andrea Zorzi, and, more recently, Lorenzo Tanzini are of particular importance: Giorgio Chittolini, *La formazione dello stato regionale e le istituzioni del contado. Secoli XIV e XV* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979); Giorgio Chittolini, "The Italian City-State and its Territory," in *City-States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*, ed. Anthony Molho, Kurt Raaflaub, and Julia Emlen (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), 589–602; Andrea Zorzi, "L'organizzazione del territorio in area fiorentina tra XIII e XIV secolo," in *L'organizzazione del territorio in Italia e Germania: secoli XIII e XIV*, ed. Giorgio Chittolini and Dietmar Willoweit (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 279–349; Andrea Zorzi, *L'amministrazione della giustizia penale nella Repubblica fiorentina. Aspetti e problemi* (Florence: Olschki, 1988); Andrea Zorzi, "The 'material constitution' of the Florentine dominion," in *Florentine Tuscany: Structures and Practices of Power*, ed. William J. Connell and Andrea Zorzi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 6–31; Lorenzo Tanzini, *Statuti e legislazione a Firenze dal 1335 al 1415. Lo statuto cittadino del 1409* (Florence: Olschki, 2004); Lorenzo Tanzini, *Alle Origini della Toscana Moderna. Firenze e gli statuti delle comunità soggette tra XIV e XVI secolo* (Florence: Olschki, 2007); Lorenzo Tanzini, *Il governo delle leggi. Norme e pratiche delle istituzioni a Firenze dalla fine del Duecento all'inizio del Quattrocento* (Florence: Edifir, 2007).

Florence was incorporating many of its formerly autonomous Tuscan neighbours into a new political unit designated as its *dominium*, the most significant acquisitions being: Prato (1350), Pistoia (1351), San Gimignano (1353), Volterra (1361), San Miniato (1370), Arezzo (1384), Montepulciano (1390), and, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the landmark conquest of Pisa (1406).[8] Although Florence's relations with the inhabitants of its subject territory were undoubtedly complex and variegated, Lorenzo Tanzini has pointed to a unifying feature in the republic's official approach: from as early as the 1330s, Florence reserved the right to review and, if necessary, amend each subject community's statutes,[9] a right that from the middle of the century it held over some larger communities—including Pistoia, Volterra, Arezzo, and Pisa—which, as *civitates*, or city-states, had previously ranked as fully independent juridical entities.

This phase of concerted Florentine expansionism happened to coincide with the first waves of Petrarchan humanism. Florence's humanist spokesmen thus came to face a seemingly insoluble dilemma. On the one hand, they wanted to claim that the Florentine *civitas* was free. Citing Cicero's description of *civitates* as "assemblies and gatherings of men associated in justice,"[10] they insisted that Florence not only qualified as a *civitas*, but also as a *civitas libera*:

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[8] These dates of incorporation into the *dominium* are taken from William J. Connell, "Introduction," in *Florentine* Tuscany, ed. Connell and Zorzi, 1–5, at 3. On defining the *civitates*, see Giorgio Chittolini, "Cities, 'City-States,' and Regional States in North-Central Italy," in *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, A.D. 1000 to 1800*, ed. Charles Tilly and Wim P. Blockmans (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 28–43, at 29–32.

[9] Tanzini, *Alle origini della Toscana moderna*.

[10] Cic. *Rep*. 6.13, referenced by Coluccio Salutati, "Contra maledicum et obiurgatorem," in Coluccio Salutati, *Political Writings*, ed. Stefano U. Baldassarri and trans. Rolf Bagemihl (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 174–395, at 218; and by Leonardo Bruni, *Epistolarum libri VIII*, ed. Lorenzo Mehus, vol. 1 (Florence, 1741), 3.9, p. 78. Peter Stacey's current work is addressing the humanist exploitation of this Ciceronian definition. Unless noted otherwise, all translations of classical texts follow the standard Loeb editions.

no agent inside or outside the *civitas* could lawfully override the Florentine people's prerogative to determine collectively the laws embodying justice. The Florentine *populus* was therefore not in the *dominium* (dominion) of any person other than itself; it was its own *dominus* (master) and hence not a slave. On the other hand, the humanists were reluctant to acknowledge that Florence's subjects in the *dominium* had lost their free status. But how could subject communities continue to be understood as *civitates*, let alone as *civitates liberae*, when Florence had arrogated the right to approve their laws? At a juridical level, at least, it looked very much like the Florentine Republic was behaving as a *dominus*, dissolving free *civitates* and imposing slavery over them. Whereas the Romans often readily conceded—indeed glorified—the point that, according to their own understanding of liberty, they had enslaved their provincial subjects, Florentine humanists would go to considerable lengths to avoid describing their empire in terms of slavery. Their theory of liberty thus risked descending into incoherence: the Florentines could hardly proclaim themselves the *dominus* of alien peoples without conceding that their new subjects were no longer free.

As I discuss below, the fact that attempting to articulate a neo-Roman conception of liberty while subjecting formerly free peoples to imperial rule posed a grave ideological problem to Florentine republicans has scarcely registered in the modern historiography. Consequently, there has been only limited progress in identifying and exploring the range of classical conceptual materials used to legitimate imperial republicanism in the Renaissance period. This dissertation attempts to remedy some of the problems created by this lacuna. In doing so, it builds on the work of modern classicists who have shown that Roman literature supplies alternative modes of thinking about states of imperial dependency outside the dominant

ideological binary of masters and slaves; the Romans sometimes sought to transfigure their imperial subjects into classes of free people, including beneficiaries, wards, and clients.[11] It is highly significant that these were originally ways of conceptualizing states of free dependency within an imperial structure that had been created by a republic and would only later succumb to monarchical authority under the figure of the Roman *princeps*. There was thus an impeccably classical and highly distinguished language of republican empire available to the humanists committed to supporting Florence's imperial project. It is the humanist rearticulation and reevaluation of this language that is the subject of this dissertation.

In its broadest ambitions, this project aims to illuminate the imperial depths of the Florentine Renaissance's contribution to the early modern republican tradition. It proposes that the first meaningful post-classical appearance of an imperial version of republicanism occurs within early Florentine humanist political thought. It demonstrates that the resurrection of the imperial republic involved the exploitation of a distinct set of classical Roman concepts within the specific context of humanist intellectual activity and territorial state formation. The Italian Renaissance therefore provided a circuit through which a language of republican empire was transmitted from ancient Rome to the early modern world, supplying a range of conceptual resources with which later thinkers could tackle imperial issues from a republican perspective.

However, this dissertation also brings to light a radically divergent Renaissance conception of empire: Machiavelli's theory of the imperial republic. It reveals that Machiavelli deconstructs the conceptual materials that earlier Florentine humanists had helped revive by taking as his theoretical starting point a recognition that exercising imperial rule over peoples not

[11] I also examine this scholarship below.

fully incorporated into the republic's citizen body involves their domination and enslavement. Machiavelli now emerges as a powerful, yet deeply unsettling theorist of empire; one who unmasks the imperial relationship as the master-slave relation, only then to require the republic to dominate others to secure its freedom. An awareness of the two Renaissance stories that this dissertation uncovers should transform our view of subsequent early modern approaches to the problem of liberty and empire.

II. LIBERTY AND EMPIRE: THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PROBLEM

In an attempt to provide a more complete picture of the relationship between liberty and empire in the Florentine Renaissance, this dissertation draws connections between three bodies of modern historiography which until now have remained largely insulated from one another: the work of historians of political thought on Italian Renaissance republicanism, and specifically its imperial character; studies by classicists on Roman thinking about the Republic's imperialism; the recent literature on the evolution in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of the Florentine territorial state.

The historiographical issues that some new work on the imperial dimensions of Renaissance republicanism has been attempting to address originate in Hans Baron's now classic *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*. *The Crisis* was first published in 1955, but Baron initiated the project during the Second World War and the work very much reflects the anxieties of that historical moment.[12] Although Baron argued that the emergence in the early Renaissance

[12] Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955). Baron noted in his

of competing Italian territorial states provided the generative conditions for the political ideology he described as "civic humanism," he offered a heavily lop-sided account of the period's foreign affairs. Baron characterized Florentine foreign policy and its accompanying political thought as responding to Milanese imperialism at the turn of the fourteenth century under the 'tyrant' Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti. On Baron's understanding, Milan, as a tyrant state, was expansionist by nature,[13] while republican Florence, after some earlier abortive imperial experiments, was from around the middle of the fourteenth century onwards concerned simply to preserve the balance of power on the Italian peninsula. He stressed the importance of Florence's promotion of "defensive leagues" in Tuscany in the later Trecento and devoted just a single sentence to the Florentine subjection of Pistoia, Volterra, and Arezzo.[14] Mirroring the partisan ideology of his humanist sources, Baron thus presented Florentine foreign policy and the civic humanism it supposedly generated as reactionary, defensive, and driven by an entirely untainted love of civic liberty.[15]

In the sixty years or so since *The Crisis* first appeared in print, there has been an unending series of refinements to Baron's thesis.[16] Yet until recently there had remained a marked reluctance to reconsider the place of empire in the development of Florentine humanist

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acknowledgements that he began work on significant portions of the book, including its opening two parts, in 1942. Baron, *The Crisis*, xv.

[13] Baron, *The Crisis*, 12–13.

[14] Baron, *The Crisis*, 16.

[15] Baron restated his view of the defensive character of Florentine territorial ambitions in Hans Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 46 and 81–82.

[16] For a sample of reactions to Baron's work, see James Hankins, "The 'Baron Thesis' after Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56.2 (1995): 309–38; James Hankins, ed., *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). For an important early critique, see Jerold E. Seigel, '"Civic Humanism' or Ciceronian Rhetoric? The Culture of Petrarch and Bruni," *Past and Present* 34 (1966): 3–48.

thought. This can largely be attributed to the influence on post-Baron scholarship of another classic contribution to the history of Renaissance republicanism: the first volume of Quentin Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*.[17] In his 1978 work, Skinner made two major (and correct) modifications to Baron's account of Florentine civic humanism.[18] He showed that some of the ideology's defining features, such as its articulation of a language of republican *libertas*, had roots which extended back into the thirteenth-century works of Italian rhetoricians schooled in the *ars dictaminis*. Skinner was thus able to negate the importance of Baron's critical moment at the turn of the fourteenth century, demonstrating instead that Florentine civic humanism had a very long period of gestation. *The Foundations* also deepened our understanding of the classical substrata on which civic humanist thought was built, underlining its largely Roman, and particularly Ciceronian, qualities. Both of Skinner's revisions, however, engendered new historiographical problems. First, in his *longue-durée* view of the medieval and Renaissance republican tradition, Skinner evacuated from the political context the imperial concerns which Baron had emphasized, albeit from a reductively Florentine-centric perspective. And second, while examining the classical Roman sources on which republican thought in the Italian Middle Ages and Renaissance was based, Skinner focused his attention on *libertas*, yet provided little commentary on the critical point that, in many of the most influential sources,

[17] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 1, *The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[18] Skinner, *The Renaissance*, 3–189. Marco Geuna provides a useful summary of Skinner's argument: Marco Geuna, "Skinner, pre-humanist rhetorical culture and Machiavelli," in Annabel Brett, James Tully, and Holly Hamilton-Bleakley, eds., *Rethinking the Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 50–72, at 50–55.

including the works of Cicero, Sallust, and Livy, the concept features embedded within accounts of the expansion of Roman *imperium*.[19]

It is this reconstruction of a Renaissance republicanism from which empire is largely absent—a perspective which has been entrenched in the wake of the work of Baron and Skinner by Maurizio Viroli in particular[20]—that the recent historiography on the imperial aspects of early modern republican thought has set out to correct. Intellectual and ideological issues raised by the problem of the Florentine imperial republic have begun to be explored in essays and articles by, among others, William J. Connell, Alison Brown, and Ricardo Fubini.[21] It should be stressed, however, that this literature is still finding its feet – there are only a handful of major studies

[19] The relatively marginal position that the concept of empire occupies in Skinner's work has arguably created some currently unresolved problems for his investigations into the later fortunes of what he has come to call "the neo-Roman" or "republican" theory of liberty. Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[20] Maurizio Viroli, "Machiavelli and the republican idea of politics," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 143–72; Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2–177; Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 21–40; Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 139–42; Maurizio Viroli, *Republicanism* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 3–44.

[21] William J. Connell, "The humanist citizen as provincial governor," in *Florentine Tuscany*, ed. Connell and Zorzi, 144–64; William J. Connell, "Machiavelli on Growth as an End," in *Historians and Ideologues: Essays in Honor of Donald R. Kelley*, ed. Anthony T. Grafton and J. H. M. Salmon (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 259–77; Alison Brown, "The language of empire," in *Florentine Tuscany*, ed. Connell and Zorzi, 32–47; Ricardo Fubini, "La Rivendicazione di Firenze della sovranità statale e il contributo delle 'Historiae' di Leonardo Bruni," reprinted in Ricardo Fubini, *Storiografia dell'Umanesimo in Italia da Leonardo Bruni ad Annio da Viterbo* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 2003), 131–64. See also Elena Fasano Guarini, "Machiavelli and the crisis of the Italian republics," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, 17–40; Jane Black, "Constitutional ambitions, legal realities and the Florentine state," in *Florentine Tuscany*, ed. Connell and Zorzi, 48–64; Patrick Gilli, "Empire et italianité au XVe siècle: l'opinion des juristes et des humanists," in *Idées d'empire en Italie et en Espagne (XIVe-XVIIe siècle)*, ed. Françoise Crémoux and Jean-Louis Fournel (Rouen: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2010), 47–68; Nikola Regent, "Machiavelli: Empire, *Virtù* and the Final Downfall," *History of Political Thought* 32.5 (2011): 751–72.

which engage closely with the intellectual history of republican empire in the Italian Renaissance.[22] Two stand out.

Mikael Hörnqvist has produced the first, and currently only, monograph which lays out a historically contextualized account of Machiavelli's imperial thinking.[23] In the 2004 *Machiavelli and Empire*, Hörnqvist reads Machiavelli's political thought in light of humanist discussions of empire from the later Trecento onwards, and the realities of Florentine imperialist policy in Tuscany and its justification by the governing elite at the turn of the Cinquecento. Hörnqvist is particularly successful in bringing out the relevance of this second context, highlighting Machiavelli's conscious departures from the foreign policy decisions of his time.[24] Hörnqvist's sketch of the development of Florentine humanist approaches to empire prior to Machiavelli's intervention is less illuminating, since little attempt is made to excavate the classical arguments and concepts from which this earlier body of thought drew its strength.[25] In an early essay, however, Hörnqvist did note in passing that "Bruni's republicanism is centered around the idea

[22] Three recent works by political scientists examine the subject of empire in Machiavelli's political thought: Erica Benner, *Machiavelli's Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); John P. McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Alissa M. Ardito, *Machiavelli and the Modern State:* The Prince*, the* Discourses on Livy*, and the Extended Territorial Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). None of these studies, however, seek to interpret Machiavelli's imperial thinking in view of previous intellectual developments in Florentine humanist political thought. I discuss this bibliography in more detail in Chapter Four.

[23] Mikael Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For Hörnqvist's initial elaboration of his basic argument, see Mikael Hörnqvist, "The two myths of civic humanism," in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, ed. Hankins, 105–42. His most recent contribution appears in Mikael Hörnqvist, "Machiavelli's Three Desires: Florentine Republicans on Liberty, Empire, and Justice," in *Empire and Modern Political Thought*, ed. Sankar Muthu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7–29.

[24] Especially Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 97–112.

[25] Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 44–75.

of the *imperium populi Romani* and the asymmetrical relationship of patronage and *clientela* which in the ancient past had characterized the relations between the Roman people and its allies."[26] Yet Hörnqvist did not substantiate this insight here and it disappears from view entirely in *Machiavelli and Empire*. Moreover, although he notes in his monograph that Sallust's and Livy's works of historiography were important sources with which humanists could support the position that liberty and empire were not incompatible goals for the Florentine Republic to pursue, Hörnqvist does not offer a sustained examination of how these and other Roman texts were received into humanist political culture. Most problematically of all, Hörnqvist overlooks the specific problem of liberty and empire with which this dissertation is occupied. In Hörnqvist's presentation, Florentine humanism was content to propose "liberty at home, empire abroad," but was apparently largely unconcerned with finding appropriate ways to conceptualize the status of Florence's subject populations.[27]

J. G. A. Pocock has gone further than anyone in unearthing the classical foundations of humanist thinking about empire. In the third volume, published in 2003, of his monumental project to contextualize the historical thought of Edward Gibbon, Pocock delineates some of the most influential classical approaches to understanding the decline and fall of the Roman Republic, considering the works of Polybius, Sallust, Appian, and Tacitus.[28] He goes on to

[26] Hörnqvist, "Two Myths," 125.

[27] I explain in more detail the ways in which my work departs from that of Hörnqvist in Chapter Four.

[28] Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 17–60.

examine in a later section the return of the issue in Italian humanist thought from Leonardo Bruni, through Flavio Biondo, to Machiavelli.[29]

Pocock's crucial insight for the development of Renaissance imperial thought is that Florentine humanism, from Bruni onwards, had to contend with the historical problem presented by Republican Rome: the imperialist forces generated by republican liberty and channeled towards the creation of republican empire would ultimately, in the hands of the Caesars, be turned against the Republic itself, bringing about the end to both Roman *libertas* and, much later, *imperium*. Moreover, Pocock shows that Bruni understood that the Roman Republic suffocated the liberty of other political entities, including ancient Florence, and that it was only after the disintegration of Roman power in Italy that free cities could reemerge on the peninsula and expand. As a contribution to the history of historiography, Pocock is focused in his *Barbarism and Religion* series on the elaboration of historical narratives and therefore in *The First Decline and Fall* his review of classical thinking about empire is necessarily circumscribed. But in a recent essay on Machiavelli's treatment of the problematic Roman inheritance which Bruni had brought to light,[30] Pocock has begun to explore how the dynamic between *libertas* and *imperium* played out in a wider range of Roman writing, gesturing towards an important distinction between Cicero's rhetorical and philosophical defense of republican empire and Sallust's historical account of the role empire played in the Republic's declension into tyranny. Pocock's piece offers a glimpse—but only a glimpse—of the enhanced image of the Renaissance imperial

[29] Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 153–235.

[30] J. G. A. Pocock, "Machiavelli and Rome: the Republic as ideal and as history," in *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. John M. Najemy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 144–56.

republic that we will have before us once we have come to a better understanding of its classical Roman heritage.

If we step back from this new scholarship on liberty and empire in the Renaissance republican tradition, we will see that it contains two clear and imposing problems. First, it has not laid bare the tradition's specific classical linguistic and conceptual foundations. Second, accounts of imperial republican thought in Renaissance Italy have so far not attempted to understand its development within the most obviously pertinent and immediate set of political contexts: the creation and employment of various institutional apparatuses designed to govern the new Italian territorial states, of which the Republic of Florence has left the deepest evidential imprint and is supported by the richest secondary literature. It is precisely because of these two major shortcomings in the current scholarship on the Renaissance imperial republic that I bring to bear on the subject material from two bodies of historiography that have been almost entirely neglected by historians of Renaissance political thought.

In order to recapture some of the more influential Roman understandings of republican empire, this dissertation immerses itself in classical scholarship on the subject from the last fifty years or so. It applies to the Renaissance period the insights of some studies on Roman imperialism which have examined notions of empire that are not configured primarily around the concept of servitude. This body of scholarly literature bridges from the foundational work of Ernst Badian to the most recent scholarship, represented by the investigations of, among others, Myles Lavan and Malcolm Schofield.[31] In his 1958 *Foreign Clientelae*, Badian argued that

[31] Ernst Badian, *Foreign Clientelae, 264–70 BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958); Myles Lavan, *Slaves to Rome: Paradigms of Empire in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Schofield's work on imperialism in Cicero's political philosophy is forthcoming. For now, see Malcolm Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism, Imperialism and Justice in Cicero's *Republic* and *Laws*," *The Journal of*

Roman imperial policy towards certain states, particularly those of the Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean, was shaped significantly by notions of *patrocinium* (patronage) and *clientela* (clientage) which had originally structured Roman domestic relationships, but were then applied to the interstate arena.[32] Badian's analysis has since been contested, reasserted, and modified, leaving us with a nuanced account of the importance of patron-client relationships in Roman imperial thought and practice, especially during the Middle Republic.

In this dissertation I am particularly concerned to map out the concepts of *patrocinium* and *clientela* in Renaissance imperial discourse. But I am also committed to registering a considerably wider range of Roman lexical resources, many of which are currently being discussed in the classical scholarship. Lavan's work is especially important in this respect. In his 2013 *Slaves to Rome*, Lavan reimagines a number of different intellectual paradigms in which imperial relationships were conceived during the late Republic and Principate. He points out that foreign peoples subject to Roman *imperium* are described in classical writing as *servi* (slaves), but also as *socii* (allies), *amici* (friends), *provinciales* (provincials), *stipendiarii* (tributaries), and

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Intellectual History and Political Thought 2.1 (2013): 5–34. These works form part of a very large bibliography; other major contributions include: William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327–70 BC* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); J. Rich, "Patronage and International Relations in the Roman Republic," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Anthony Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1989), 117–35; Jean-Louis Ferrary, "The Hellenistic World and Roman Political Patronage," in *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography*, ed. Paul A. Cartledge, Peter Garnsey and Erich S. Gruen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 105–19; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Clifford Ando, *Law, Language, and Empire in the Roman Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Paul J. Burton, *Friendship and Empire: Roman Diplomacy and Imperialism in the Middle Republic (355–146 BC)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[32] Adrian Sherwin-White had anticipated to some extent Badian's insight. Adrian N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939). For the Roman understanding of patronage at home, see Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

so on. Rome's relations with such peoples were articulated, Lavan shows, with concepts such as *tutela* (guardianship) and *beneficium* (benefit), as well as with *patrocinium* and *clientela.* A wide spectrum of the status of subject persons is thus present in Roman imperial thought, a fact which complicates a simplistic, and perhaps ideologically less useful, binary of master-slave, or even of patron-client. *Patrocinium* and *clientela* are, then, parts of a larger conceptual apparatus and I therefore flesh out not just these concepts but also some of the Renaissance imperial republic's other classical components. Many of the concepts I pick out denote relationships in Roman private law and I stress the willingness of Florentine humanists to exploit in their political thought Roman legal terminology.[33] Roman philosophers, including Cicero himself, had imbued their political theory with a "legal aspect,"[34] and thus the humanists were following in their classical authorities' footsteps when doing the same.

While tracing the intellectual formation of Florentine humanist ideas of empire in light of this classical inheritance, this dissertation takes into account actual imperial developments on the Italian peninsula. It relies on work by institutional historians concerned with the creation of the Florentine territorial state, now one of the central issues in Italian Renaissance studies. Marvin Becker provided in the late 1960s an early corrective to Baron's sketch of Florentine foreign policy, arguing that the extension of Florence's governmental instruments into its expanding territory from around 1350 onwards was an act of imperialism, aimed primarily at advancing the

[33] For this willingness across early modern Europe, see Daniel Lee, *Popular Sovereignty in Early Modern Constitutional Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[34] Miriam Griffin, "Latin Philosophy and Roman law," in Politeia *in Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. Verity Harte and Melissa Lane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 96–115, at 98.

state's fiscal interests on a regional scale.[35] Nevertheless, it was not until the 1970s, and more so the 1980s, that institutional historians began to approach the history of the Florentine Republic as inseparable from the history of the *dominium* which it established and oversaw. The most recent scholarship ranges widely over this field of inquiry, covering legislative, fiscal, administrative, and military innovations from Florentine and broader Tuscan perspectives. The bulk of this historiography has been conducted by Italian scholars such as Giorgio Chittolini, Andrea Zorzi, and, in the last fifteen years or so, Lorenzo Tanzini,[36] but there is also recent Anglophone and Francophone work of significance.[37] In addition, there are bibliographies for the experience of subjection to Florence for each of the major Tuscan *civitates*.[38]

It may be an obvious point, but it is important to underline that the situation on the ground in the Florentine *dominium* changed considerably over the period covered by this dissertation. We begin under Salutati's chancellorship and thus in an early phase of consolidation when Florence had cause to be optimistic about the future of its new, and indeed still growing,

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[35] Marvin B. Becker, *Florence in Transition*, vol. 2, *Studies in the Rise of the Territorial State* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968).

[36] For their work, see n. 7 above.

[37] See, for example, the two collections of essays: Connell and Zorzi, eds., *Florentine Tuscany*; Jean Boutier, Sandro Landi, and Olivier Rouchon, eds., *Florence et la Toscane, XIVe–XIXe siècles. Les dynamiques d'un État italien* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004).

[38] For Pisa, see Elena Fasano Guarini, "Città soggette e contadi nel dominio fiorentino tra Quattro e Cinquecento: il caso pisano," in *Ricerche di Storia Moderna*, vol. 1, ed. Mario Mirri (Pisa: Pacini, 1976), 1–94; Sergio Tognetti, ed., *Firenze e Pisa dopo il 1406. La creazione di uno spazio regionale* (Florence: Olschki, 2010); for Pistoia, William J. Connell, "Clientelismo e stato territoriale: Il potere fiorentino a Pistoia nel XV secolo," *Società e storia* 53 (1991): 523–43; Stephen J. Milner, "Rubrics and requests: statutory division and supra-communal clientage in Pistoia," in *Florentine Tuscany*, ed. Connell and Zorzi, 312–32; for Volterra, Lorenzo Fabbri, "Patronage and its role in government: the Florentine patriciate and Volterra," in *Florentine Tuscany*, ed. Connell and Zorzi, 225–41; for Arezzo, A. Antoniella, "Affermazione e forme istituzionali della dominazione fiorentina sul territorio di Arezzo (secc. XIV–XVI)," in *Annali Aretini*, vol. 1 (1993), 173–203; Robert Black, "Arezzo, the Medici and the Florentine Regime," in *Florentine Tuscany*, ed. Connell and Zorzi, 293–311.

imperial state. But by the time we reach the early Cinquecento, we find the *dominium* in turmoil after more than a century of what Machiavelli will identify as Florence's imperial misrule. Indeed, Machiavelli's belief that it is an extremely difficult thing to force formerly free people to give up on their liberty must, at least in part, be born from reflecting on Florence's failure in the Quattrocento to establish a lasting control over its subject territory. It was to this shifting political reality that Machiavelli's imperial thought and that of the other humanists considered in this dissertation had to respond.

My examination of the problem of liberty and empire in early Florentine humanist and Machiavellian political thought has implications for a body of scholarship dealing with the intellectual history of empire in later periods. Machiavelli is a pivotal figure for, among other historians of early modern imperial thought, Richard Tuck, David Armitage, and Diego Panizza, all of whom associate him with a humanist approach to thinking about empire.[39] Although Machiavelli is well aware of the classical resources under discussion below, he handles them in a way that sharply marks him off from earlier Florentine humanists like Salutati and the young

[39] Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 16–50; David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 125–45; David Armitage, "Empire and Liberty: A Republican Dilemma," in Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, vol. 2, *The Values of Republicanism in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29–46; Diego Panizza, "Political Theory and Jurisprudence in Gentili's *De Iure Belli*: The great debate between 'theological' and 'humanist' perspectives from Vitoria to Grotius," *International Law and Justice Working Paper* 15 (2005) (History and Theory of International Law Series); Diego Panizza, "Alberico Gentili's *De armis Romanis*: The Roman Model of the Just Empire," in *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations: Alberico Gentili and the Justice of Empire*, ed. Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 53–84. For the view that Machiavelli departed from other humanists on the issue of colonization, see Andrew Fitzmaurice, *Humanism and America: An Intellectual History of English Colonisation, 1500–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 167–86. On Machiavelli's place in a wide-ranging survey of imperial thought from classical antiquity to the present, see Anthony Pagden, *The Burdens of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1–44, at 4.

Bruni—as well as from much later republican thinkers like James Harrington[40]—who rely on concepts such as *patrocinium* to argue for the compatibility, under the right imperial arrangements, of free and subject status. Unmasking the claim that Rome and Florence had brought liberty to their imperial dependents, Machiavelli will state unflinchingly in the *Discorsi* that "of all hard slaveries, the hardest is that which subjects you to a republic."[41] We shall see that, after more than a century of Florentine humanist thought about empire, we reach with Machiavelli an imperial theory which embraces the concept of slavery to quite revolutionary effect.

III. CHAPTER OUTLINE

This dissertation comprises four chapters. Chapter One begins by delineating a series of classical Roman concepts—present in various legal, historiographical, and philosophical sources—which were used to describe imperial relations between Romans and non-Romans. Relying on the work of modern classicists, I explain how these conceptual resources were employed in Roman writing to imagine for subject peoples a dependent but nonetheless free status within the Roman Republic's imperial system. I then show that at the turn of the fourteenth century two of the most illustrious early Florentine humanists, Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni, drew on this

[40] I discuss Harrington's *Oceana* in this dissertation's Conclusion.

[41] "Di tutte le servitú dure, quella è durissima che ti sottomette a una republica." Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 2.2, p. 143. (Hereafter *Discorsi*.) My translations of the *Discorsi* are adapted from Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Sweetness of Power. Machiavelli's* Discourses *and Guicciardini's* Considerations, trans. James B. Atkinson and David Sices (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002).

Roman conceptual apparatus to construct arguments in favour of the benevolence of Florence's imperial project. I demonstrate that a patronal vision of empire of a predominantly Ciceronian and Livian pedigree emerges in official Florentine humanist ideology, enabling Florence to answer with a classicizing authority the charge that it had enslaved its imperial dependents.

Chapter Two examines the themes of liberty and empire in Leonardo Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi*, the most influential work of Quattrocento Florentine humanist historiography. I start by considering Bruni's treatment in Book One of the *Historiae* of the political effects of Roman imperialism on the Italian peninsula. I argue that Bruni's revised view of the Roman Republic's imperial legacy brings into question how far republican states can be relied on to preserve the liberty of foreign peoples brought under their *imperium*. I proceed to explore the ways in which Bruni's altered perspective on the Roman Republic's imperialism leads him to reassess in the remaining books of the *Historiae* Florence's relations with its Tuscan neighbours in the Duecento and Trecento. I reveal that Bruni at times deploys classical Roman concepts such as *tutela*, *beneficium*, and *patrocinium* to present Florentine imperial policy in Tuscany as well intentioned and concerned with securing its neighbours' liberty. However, I also show that Bruni introduces into the official humanist narrative of the construction of the Florentine *dominium* a new ambivalence; at some critical moments in the *Historiae*, Bruni appears to hover on the brink of admitting that Florence had enslaved other Tuscan *civitates*.

Chapters Three and Four are devoted to Machiavelli's imperial thinking. Chapter Three opens by surveying a number of Machiavelli's early political writings, composed while he was intimately involved in the administration of the *dominium*. It shows that Machiavelli was from the outset of his career as a political agent and thinker profoundly concerned with questions of

empire, although, unlike his humanist predecessors in the chancery, he was remarkably untroubled by any need to insist that Florence's imperial project aimed at promoting liberty in Tuscany. On the contrary, in these governmental writings the concept of slavery is already beginning to cast its shadow over Machiavelli's depiction of the imperial landscape. I then turn to the more sustained and theoretically sophisticated analysis of imperial matters that Machiavelli presents in *Il Principe*, specifically in chapters three to five of the work. I highlight the important distinctions that Machiavelli makes between the imperial process as it applies to the subjection of principalities and republics, that is to say of unfree and free states. I conclude that we find in *Il Principe* the elements of a nascent theory of empire, one which sees imperialism as involving the establishment of enduring structures of command and obedience over foreign bodies and their gradual absorption into the imperializing state's own body.

Chapter Four offers a detailed reconstruction of Machiavelli's theory of empire in the *Discorsi*. It begins by asking some very basic questions about Machiavelli's understanding of human agents, as they appear both in nature, and within the simple forms of state life. From an examination of sections of the *Discorsi*, as well as some other Machiavellian texts, I argue that a naturally occurring acquisitive desire is the primary force animating Machiavelli's imperial theory. With the theory's foundations in place, I move on to inspect the differing ways in which Machiavelli sees acquisitive desire driving—or failing to drive—the imperial process in three different types of state: the principality, the aristocratic republic, and the popular republic. I find that, due to its capacity to aggregate acquisitive desire on a mass scale, it is this last version of the state which Machiavelli thinks represents the ideal vehicle for imperial expansion – a clear endorsement of the Roman Republican model of internal and external politics. Yet, as I point

out, this is also to endorse an imperial vision which entails the enslavement of previously free peoples. The chapter concludes by considering how Machiavelli conceptualizes the process whereby foreign peoples and states can be subjected to, and finally absorbed within, the republic's body. I suggest that while Machiavelli allocates citizenship an important role in this process, his theory insists that the imperial republic must first extinguish its subjects' old civic identities if it is to induct them into a new liberty.

CHAPTER 1

Subjection without Servitude: The Renaissance of the Imperial Protectorate[42]

This chapter examines the redeployment in the early Renaissance of an array of Roman concepts that provided the elements of a distinctive body of humanist thought about empire. These classical intellectual resources have gone largely unexplored in the historiography of Italian Renaissance political thought and my aim is to bring them back squarely into view.[43] As I show, they were tailored to address an intractable, and historically recurring, ideological problem: how to coordinate claims in favour of both republican liberty and imperial subjection. In Part One of this chapter I excavate some of the relevant classical materials, before turning in Part Two to their Renaissance development.

Taking my cue from an arc of scholarship by modern classicists—stretching from Ernst Badian's ground-breaking *Foreign Clientelae* to Myles Lavan's recent and revisionist *Slaves to Rome*[44]—I offer in Part One a typology of the ways in which Roman thinkers could

[42] A considerably briefer and somewhat different version of the argument presented in this chapter is to be published as: Adam Woodhouse, "Subjection without Servitude: The Imperial Protectorate in Renaissance Political Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 79.4 (forthcoming October 2018).

[43] For the literature on Italian humanist approaches to empire, see my comments in the Introduction. Some of the concepts I consider below have been examined by intellectual historians of later imperial thinking: for imperial tutelage in sixteenth-century scholasticism, see Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 57–108; for imperial protection viewed from various angles, see Lauren Benton, Adam Clulow, and Bain Attwood, eds., *Protection and Empire: A Global History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[44] Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*; Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*. I also discuss this historiography in the Introduction.

conceptualize relations between the *populus Romanus* and alien peoples and states. While Lavan is more alert than Badian had been to the important fact that the Romans routinely, and often proudly, claimed to rule their foreign subjects as a master rules his slaves, both these and other classicists have shown that the Romans also resorted to alternative models for thinking about states of imperial dependency which do not rely on the master-slave binary; relationships between Romans and non-Romans could be compared to those between fathers and children, guardians and wards, benefactors and beneficiaries, patrons and clients. These models, organized around concepts such as *patria potestas*, *tutela*, *beneficium*, *patrocinium*, and *clientela*, share a common source of ideological power: by projecting onto the foreign arena concepts that described domestic social relations between free citizens in a *res publica*, they allowed the Romans to shield themselves from the allegation that those brought under their *imperium* had been reduced to servitude. As Malcolm Schofield is beginning to show in his new work on Cicero,[45] the capacity of these models to sidestep, or even solve, the problem of a conception of empire tainted by slavery made them useful tools of analysis in philosophical discussions of Rome's imperial project, particularly with regards to questions of justice.

In Part Two I identify the presence of these classical resources in some prominent works of early Renaissance political thought and indicate how humanists adapted and cross-fertilized them to create a strain of imperial thinking that was both novel and recognizably Roman. In doing so, I focus on a famous episode of Renaissance intellectual history. The military and ideological clash between Milan and Florence at the end of the fourteenth century and the opening of the fifteenth has been at the heart of modern accounts of Renaissance republicanism

[45] Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism, Imperialism and Justice."

since the publication of Hans Baron's *The Crisis*.[46] Although the subsequent historiography has carefully sifted through and corrected the Baron thesis, the Milanese-Florentine conflict continues to occupy a critical position, as it generated a series of texts, including Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio Florentinae urbis* (c. 1403/04),[47] which are still regarded as among the most vocal humanist celebrations of republican liberty before Machiavelli's *Discorsi* (completed c. 1518).[48] However, while advertising the benefits enjoyed by citizens living in a *civitas libera*, humanists in the Florentine chancery, such as Coluccio Salutati and Bruni himself, had to respond to an accusation given particular polemical bite by Antonio Loschi, the humanist Chancellor of Milan, but one which reflected a more widely-felt and deeply-seated hostility towards Florence: the Florentine people were oppressing their imperial subjects "under the yoke of intolerable servitude."[49]

As we shall see, the Florentine humanists' reaction was to dig into the classical materials that I want to highlight. Although Florence may have claimed *de iure* to exercise *dominium* over its foreign subjects, Salutati and Bruni had recourse to a series of concepts that could signify at an ideological level the non-dominating character of Florentine rule. I want to show that both humanists drew particular strength from a discernibly Roman formulation of the concept of

[46] See my discussion in the Introduction.

[47] On dating the *Laudatio*, see James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. 2 (London and Leiden: Brill, 1990), 367–78.

[48] I rely on Giorgio Inglese's attempts to date the *Discorsi*: Giorgio Inglese, *Per Machiavelli: L'arte dello stato, la cognizione delle storie* (Rome: Carocci, 2006), 93–95.

[49] "Sub iugo intolerabilis servitutis." Antonio Loschi, "Invectiva in Florentinos," in Salutati, *Political Writings*, 144–67, at 148. My translations of Loschi's and Salutati's texts are adapted from those of Bagemihl in this edition.

patronage. Roman writers, most notably Cicero and Livy, invoked the language of *patrocinium* (patronage) and *clientela* (clientage) to describe their empire as a protectorate consisting of relations forged between a beneficent patron state and its dependent—yet free—clients. Whereas *patrocinium* refers in Roman discourse to the asymmetric relationship between a *patronus* and his freeborn *cliens*, Florentine humanists could also exploit the distinct but neighbouring concept of *patronatus*: the relation between a former master and his freed slave. The imperial relationship that the Florentines envisage is not always one between two groups of free people, but sometimes, and significantly, between a free people and a *freed* people; the Florentine claim here is that to submit to the imperial protectorate is to be liberated from slavery.

I. ROMAN CONCEPTIONS OF EMPIRE: LAW, HISTORY, AND PHILOSOPHY

Roman law assigned every living person to one of two groups: free persons (*liberi*) and slaves (*servi*). This "great divide" in the Roman law of persons is elaborated in its canonical form in the opening book of the *Digest*, under the rubric *On Human Status*. Here freedom is defined as "one's natural power of doing what one pleases, save insofar as it is ruled out either by coercion or by law," whereas slavery is said to be "an institution of the *ius gentium*, whereby someone is against nature made subject to the ownership of another [*dominio alieno*]."[50] And while the law brings together conceptually all slaves to form a single group, it splits the free in two: the

[50] *The Digest of Justinian*, ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krueger, English trans. ed. Alan Watson, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 1.5.4.

freeborn (*ingenui*) and those who had previously been slaves but are now free (*libertini*).[51] This is not, however, the extent of the Roman law of persons. The *Digest*'s next chapter opens up some fertile conceptual space by introducing a second division between those who are "*sui iuris*" and those "within the jurisdiction of someone else" (*alieno iuri subiectae sunt*), which is equivalent to being in that person's power (*in aliena potestate*). Now this group who are not *sui iuris* includes all *servi*, as slaves are in their masters' *potestas*, but it also includes, crucially, certain free individuals, such as all men and women under the *patria potestas* of a *paterfamilias*, the male head of a household.[52]

Observing this point helps us make some refinements to Quentin Skinner's immensely influential work on the history of the Roman, and neo-Roman, concept of liberty.[53] In a landmark article, Skinner notes that in Roman legal thought "to lack the status of a free citizen must be for that person not to be *sui iuris* but instead to be *sub potestate*, under the power or subject to the will of someone else."[54] However, citizens under *patria potestas* are not *sui iuris* yet remain free, and there exist other classes of dependent citizen.[55] The key point to recognize is that in Roman

[51] *Digest* 1.5.5.

[52] *Digest* 1.6.1–4.

[53] Skinner's bibliography on the topic is substantial. As an introduction, see Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*. For more on Skinner's contribution and further bibliography, see Peter Stacey, "Free and Unfree States in Machiavelli's Political Philosophy," in *Freedom and the Construction of Europe*, vol. 1, *Religious Freedom and Civil Liberty*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Martin van Gelderen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 176–94, at 178–80.

[54] Quentin Skinner, "A Third Concept of Liberty," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2002): 237–68, at 249.

[55] For a critique of Skinner on this issue, see Clifford Ando, "'A Dwelling Beyond Violence': On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Contemporary Republicans," *History of Political Thought* 31.2 (2010): 183–200, at 193–94.

law a person can indeed be subjected to another's *ius* and *potestas* without necessarily forfeiting his or her free status. Slaves, then, cannot be differentiated from the free simply by their dependency on another's *ius* and *potestas*, but by their dependency on the *ius* and *potestas* of an alien *dominus* (master) and, as such, by their condition as items of property. The early Florentine humanists—who were of course very far from ignorant of the Roman legal texts[56]—will be extremely interested in exploring ways of constructing with their foreign subjects relationships in which there is a symmetry of free status, but an asymmetry of *ius* and *potestas* or of other, fuzzier forms of authority.

But before I pinpoint and explain the leading classical concepts and arguments that the Florentine humanists will exploit, it is worth noting that the Renaissance also inherited a broader Roman "lexicon of empire."[57] The non-citizen population of Rome's empire could be labeled as *socii*, *amici*, *provinciales*, *peregrini*, *gentes*, *stipendiarii*, *tributarii*, of which *socii* appears the most frequently in the classical sources.[58] I will not explore these terms' conceptual resonances, as, with the exceptions of *socii* (associates) and *amici* (friends), they do not echo the language of domestic social relations that I am concerned with here. However, these two exceptions, and particularly that of *amici*, are important. *Amicus* is a very common term in Roman imperial

[56] Salutati received his training as a notary in Bologna, which would have involved intensive study of Roman law. See Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1983), 20–23. Bruni also studied law: Baron, *The Crisis*, 220–21. For the later Renaissance and early modern relationship between law and humanism, see Donald R. Kelley, "Law," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 66–94, at 75–78.

[57] This is Lavan's term: *Slaves to Rome*, 21–22 and 25–72. See also John Richardson, *The Language of Empire*.

[58] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 35–53.

discourse, often appearing alongside *socius*,[59] and there is much more to say about the influence of the Roman conception of friendship on Renaissance political thought in general and on Florentine humanist thinking about empire in particular.[60] But *amicitia* deserves much fuller treatment than I can offer it here and, in any case, the greater sense of equality that an amicable relation implies between the parties involved to some extent distinguishes it conceptually from the four more explicitly asymmetric social relationships that I am about to sketch.[61] While doing so, I will try to lay out as clearly as possible some of the key distinctions between these relationships, but with the caveat that at both a conceptual and linguistic level there is considerable intermingling between them; a rather messy situation that only gets messier in the Renaissance texts.[62]

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[59] The two terms have a particularly complex and historiographically fraught relationship: see Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 37–38 and bibliography cited therein. Lavan does not explain, however, why he declines to give friendship a "paradigmatic" role in fashioning conceptions of inter-state relations. Badian blunts the conceptual specificity of *amicitia* in imperial discourse by largely absorbing it into *clientela*: Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, 12–13 and 68. For critiques, see Richard Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Wallace-Hadrill, 49–62; Burton, *Friendship and Empire*; Michael Snowden, "Beyond *Clientela*: The Instrumentality of *Amicitia* in the Greek East," in *Foreign* clientelae *in the Roman Empire: A Reconsideration*, ed. Martin Jehne and Francisco Pina Polo (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015), 209–24.

[60] See Annalisa Ceron, *L'amicizia civile e gli amici del principe. Lo spazio politico dell'amicizia nel pensiero del Quattrocento* (EUM, Macerata, 2011); Annalisa Ceron, "Political Friendship in Renaissance Florence: Palmieri's *Vita civile* and Platina's *De optimo cive*," *History of European Ideas* 41.3 (2015): 301–17. Cicero's representation of *amicitia* is of particular importance to humanist thought. His *De amicitia* is well represented in humanist manuscripts, but the only manuscript containing all sixteen extant books of the *Epistulae ad familiares* was found by a search initiated by Salutati, who then helped to reintroduce the work to Western intellectual life. See Richard Rouse's entry on the *Epistulae ad familiares* in L. D. Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 138–42.

[61] The unequal "friendships" made between Rome and other peoples and states do have, however, an important place in Roman imperial thought, as I illustrate in passing below with reference to some Livian remarks on Capua.

[62] For instance, classicists have argued that the Romans, in both domestic and foreign contexts, often cloaked what were in fact patron-client relations with the language of friendship in order to present for ideological purposes fundamentally unequal relationships in terms that suggested a basic equality between the parties.

At first glance, one of the most effective conceptual mechanisms with which both Roman and Renaissance theorists could claim to bring foreign peoples into their *ius* and *potestas* without formally extinguishing their new subjects' liberty would appear to be the deployment in imperial discourse of the relationship between a *paterfamilias* and his children (*filiifamilias*). *Patria potestas*—broadly speaking, the power that the eldest male could lawfully exercise over his family—gave the *paterfamilias* a number of robust powers in Roman private law, including the power to kill his children (*ius vitae necisque*) and to sell them to another party, creating for them a "quasi-servile status" (*in mancipio*).[63] Moreover, he was the owner of any property that his offspring might acquire. As indicated above, whereas the *paterfamilias* was *sui iuris*, his children, like his slaves, were in his *potestas* and thus *alieni iuris*. But despite these extreme impositions by private law, the *filliifamilias* still enjoyed as Roman citizens their rights by public law and, crucially, their free status. Bearing in mind these features of the father-child relation, it is perhaps surprising, then, that—with some important exceptions—it rarely appears in Roman discussions of empire, even at times when using the language of slavery becomes ideologically problematic.[64] It will, however, play a larger role in Renaissance conceptions. In particular, Florentine republicans will be concerned to establish a special, father-son bond between the

[63] On *patria potestas*, see W. W. Buckland, *A Text-Book of Roman Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 103–ff; Barry Nicholas, *An Introduction to Roman Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 65–68.

[64] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 205–10. Lavan gives only one example here of the father-son relation: Livy 7.30.19, but notes that maternal imagery becomes more prominent in the sources in Late Antiquity. However, as I discuss below, Schofield points to one extremely important appearance of a paternal model of empire in Cicero's *De republica*, which Lavan views as something of an "oddity." Cf. Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism, Imperialism and Justice," 25–28 and Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 115–18.

Romans and themselves, arguing that, as Rome's freeborn children, the Florentines have inherited a patrimony and a status that elevate them above the other peoples of Italy.

Of greater importance to Roman imperial thought is the relationship between a *tutor* (guardian) and a *pupillus* (ward); another in which a superior party is able to hold an inferior *in potestate* without extinguishing the latter's freedom. The *Digest* defines *tutela* (guardianship) as "force and power [*vis ac potestas*] … over a free person, for the protection [*ad tuendum*] of one who, on account of his age, is unable to protect himself."[65] It became necessary to appoint a *tutor* on the death of a *paterfamilias*; boys under fourteen and women of all ages released from *patria potestas* were placed under *tutela*.[66] A guardian's primary responsibility was to administer a ward's property on his or her behalf. In this respect and others, *tutela* resembles the adjacent legal concept of *cura*: another form of guardianship, exercised by a *curator* over an insane person, a spendthrift, or a minor.

In Roman writing on empire, *tutela* performs interesting conceptual work in representations of Rome's historical dealings with the Greeks.[67] It is visible, for instance, in Livy's account of the diplomatic maneuvers leading up to the proconsul T. Quinctius Flamininus's proclamation of the liberation of Greece at the Isthmian Games in 196 BCE. Earlier that year, Livy reports, Flamininus had expressed his concern that if Rome did not hurry up and grant freedom to all of Greece then the Romans would be suspected of having intervened in

[65] *Digest* 26.1.1.

[66] On *tutela*, see Buckland, *A Text-Book*, 143–ff; Nicholas, *An Introduction to Roman Law*, 90–96.

[67] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 196–98. Lavan does not designate guardianship as a "paradigm," but absorbs it into that of patronage.

Greek affairs only in order to transfer *imperium* from Philip V of Macedon to themselves.[68] Although, according to Livy, Flamininus's colleagues supported the policy aim of promoting Greek freedom, they proposed that, to prevent the Greek cities liberated from Philip from falling under a new "*dominus*," the Seleucid Antiochus III, they remained temporarily under Rome's "*tutela*."[69] In this particular context, *tutela* is exploited to imagine for foreign peoples a dependent status, occupying a grey area between untrammeled liberty and plain servitude; the concept sustains the ideologically potent argument that Rome interferes in its subjects' affairs only to safeguard their freedom.

The broad concept of *beneficium* (benefaction)—which cuts across Roman legal, political, and social thought—is in an important sense distinct from *patria potestas* and *tutela* in that it does not have the explicit function of establishing relationships whose asymmetry is understood in terms of one agent's submission to another's *potestas*. Indeed, the defining feature of the benefactor-beneficiary relation is its reciprocity, consisting in not only the exchange of goods or services, but also of moral sentiment: the receipt of a favour entails a corresponding moral obligation (*officium*).[70] In some relationships, such as friendships between social equals,[71] the giving and receiving of *beneficia* could reinforce feelings of inter-dependency, as the parties take turns playing the roles of benefactor and beneficiary. Nevertheless, benefaction also has the

[68] Livy 33.31.8–10. Livy notes that the Aetolians exhibited some skepticism about Rome's foreign policy doctrine, referring to the decree as "just verbiage giving only the illusion of liberty." Livy 33.31.3.

[69] Livy 33.31.

[70] On "the ideology of exchange" in Roman thought, see Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 158–60 and bibliography cited therein.

[71] Cic. *Amic*. 29–31.

potential to create obviously lop-sided dependent relationships; *beneficia* can "bind" and even "chain" a beneficiary to a great benefactor.[72]

Livy again provides some of the richest evidence for the mapping of the social relation onto the imperial landscape. In an episode that will interest Machiavelli,[73] Livy has Capua's ambassadors acknowledge in 343 BCE that, should Rome grant the "*beneficium*" of defending the city from the Samnites, the Campanians will be "subject and beholden" (*subiecti atque obnoxii*) to Rome, their unequal friendship secured by a "chain" (*vinculum*), but they will nevertheless retain their "*libertas*."[74] Furthermore, after Rome had declared the liberation of the Greeks, Livy's Roman legates remind the people of the city of Demetrias in 192 BCE that "all of Greece was beholden [*obnoxia*] to the Romans for the *beneficium* of liberty."[75] Livy's language in these passages—particularly the choices of *vinculum* and *obnoxius*—is shaded with connotations of servility, if not outright slavery; the oxymoronic play between liberty and servitude seems to capture the status of those whose freedom depends on Rome's *beneficia*. However, as Lavan has shown, the Romans sometimes explicitly contrasted the foreign policy options of conferring benefits on their subjects and ruling them as slaves.[76] Livy, for instance, has Scipio Africanus argue that Roman *potestas* "prefers to bind men by *beneficium* rather than fear, and to keep foreign nations linked by loyalty [*fides*] and alliance, rather than reduced to

[72] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 159–60.

[73] *Discorsi*, 2.9, pp. 157–58.

[74] Livy 7.30.2–3. This and the following example are cited by Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 161.

[75] Livy 35.31.8.

[76] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 157 and 163–66.

harsh slavery."[77] And Cicero draws a similar distinction in the *Fourth Catilinarian*, noting that "foreign enemies are either crushed and serve as us slaves or admitted [to our friendship] and consider themselves bound to us by the *beneficium*."[78] We can clearly see in these two passages that the ideological utility of *beneficium*, like the other concepts imported from the domestic sphere, lies in its capacity to offer a palatable alternative to an image of imperial subjection as slavery. And yet slavery is never far from view.

I want to discuss with more thoroughness the series of relationships that classicists have filed under the headings of *patrocinium* (patronage) and *clientela* (clientage). Patron-client relations have been for some time at the centre of historiographical debates about how to interpret both Roman domestic and foreign affairs. A basic point of contention among scholars has been what constitutes the conceptual essence of the relationship. Badian glossed *clientela* as "a name for a bundle of relationships united by the element of a permanent (or at least long-term) *fides*, to which corresponds the *officium* (&c.) of the client who receives its *beneficia*."[79] This rather baggy definition, raised under the master concept of *fides* (faith), permitted Badian to identify clientage at work in a range of sources, leading him to conclude that the patron-client relation was the dominant model for Roman imperial policy in the third and second centuries BCE. Richard Saller, however, avoids Badian's preoccupation with *fides* to give a boiled-down definition of patronage as "an exchange relationship between men of unequal social status."[80]

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[77] Livy 26.49.8. Cited by Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 164.

[78] Cicero, *Cat*. 4.22. Lavan also cites Sall. *Cat.* 9; Sall. *Iug.* 102.

[79] Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, 10.

[80] Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 8.

From this definition Saller derives a lexical set for the concept, divided into terms for agents (*patronus*, *cliens*, *amicus*) and for the goods, services and attitudes they exchange (*officium*, *beneficium*, *meritum*, *gratia*). Lavan has made some further refinements, expanding the "language of *clientela*" to include expressions such as *in fide esse*, *in fidem venire*, and *in fidem recipere*.[81] For Lavan, the distinguishing features of the relationship are its "permanence," "clear asymmetry," and the "moral obligations it imposes on *both* parties."[82] This historiographical debate underlines the richness and fluidity of the language of patronage, as well as its ability to unify conceptually a range of sub-categories of social relation, including the relationship between an elite Roman and his socially inferior freeborn follower, a lawyer and a defendant, and a former master and his freed slave.[83] It is this last species of patronal relationship, governed by the concept of *patronatus* and not *patrocinium*, that is of particular importance to my argument.

Unlike the more informal varieties of the patron-client relationship, the relation between a former master (*patronus*) and his freed slave (*libertus*) was partially regulated by law.[84] Roman law developed three formal processes by which a slave could be set free: by enrollment into the census (*manumissio censu*); by being declared free in his or her master's will (*manumissio testamento*); and, of most interest with regard to the Renaissance sources, by a sort of ritualized 'mock trial' (*manumissio vindicta*), which took its name from the wand (*vindicta*) used to touch

[81] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 179–86.

[82] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 185.

[83] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 180–81.

[84] For an overview, see Buckland, *A Text-Book*, 88–91.

the slave during the ceremony.[85] This last form of manumission imitated a *causa liberalis*, a case in which a Roman citizen acting as an *adsertor* (also *assertor*) *libertatis* would make a *vindicatio in libertatem*, a claim of freedom on behalf of someone who had allegedly been wrongfully enslaved.[86] In the *manumissio vindicta*, the *adsertor libertatis* would state before a magistrate with *imperium* that the individual to be manumitted was free (the master would make no counter claim), thereby creating the legal fiction that the slave was simply being granted his or her rightful free status.[87] On receiving the "great *beneficium*" of liberty,[88] the freedman instantly became subject to his former master's *patronatus*, a distinctive legal form of patronage, consisting in rights and obligations for both parties (*ius patronatus*).[89] In return for his liberty, it was the duty of the *libertus* to show gratitude (*gratia*) to his *patronus*, on the pain of legal punishment; in the most extreme cases, a *libertus ingratus* could even be re-enslaved.[90] The *patronus* also enjoyed property rights over his former slave's estate and could demand him to

[85] Henrik Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 11–12. Livy 2.5 reports that the word *vindicta* derives from 'Vindicius,' supposedly the name of the first slave to be freed by *manumissio vindicta* as a reward for revealing a plot to restore the Tarquins.

[86] For the *causa liberalis*, see Alan Watson, *Rome of the XII Tables: Persons and Property* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 90–97.

[87] Alan Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 24–25; Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 11.

[88] *Digest* 38.2.1.

[89] I focus for convenience on the relationship between *patronus* and *libertus*, rather than between *patronus* and *liberta*, which differed in some important respects. For instance, as all free women had to be under either *patria potestas* or *tutela*, the *patronus* of a female freed slave also acted as her *tutor*. On the freedman, see Susan Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Mouritsen, *The Freedman.*

[90] See Just., *Instit*. 1.16 on the *liberti ingrati* as an example of those who can suffer the greatest deterioration of legal status (*capitis deminutio maxima*), that is the loss of both *libertas* and *civitas*.

perform services (*operae*) if doing so had been stipulated as a requirement for manumission.[91] On his part, the patron was obliged, more by *fides* than by law, to support and protect his freedman, lest he forfeit his right of patronage.[92] In some respects, the dependent relationship between *patronus*-*libertus* mirrored that between father and son: the freedman entered into his former master's *familia*, taking his name, and a similar level of respect (*obsequium*) was due to parents and patrons.[93] But, critically, unlike the *filiusfamilias*, the freed slave was no longer held by his old master *in potestate*.[94] Indeed, although to an extent legally enforceable, the freedman's social subordination rested largely on the expectation that he would observe certain extra-legal moral norms, such as showing his patron *obsequium*, *reverentia* (reverence), *pietas* (devotion), and, above all, by maintaining *fides* (faith).[95] As for their relations with wider Roman society, even model *liberti* could not hide the indelible "stain of slavery" (*macula servitutis*); although former slaves of Roman citizens automatically themselves became *cives* with the franchise, the sense of a residual servility barred freedmen from holding magisterial office.[96]

In Roman imperial discourse, the concept of patronage taken in a broad sense is particularly conspicuous in Cicero's and Livy's visions of foreign relations.[97] As Lavan has

[91] On *operae*, see *Digest* 38.1 with Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 75–78.

[92] *Digest* 37.15 with Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen*, 80.

[93] *Digest* 37.15 with Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 37–42.

[94] Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 53 and 56.

[95] Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 51–65 and Treggiari, 81, who concludes that "the whole structure of obligations and rights between patron and freedman rested on the moral concept of *fides*."

[96] Mouritsen, *The Freedman*, 12–ff.

[97] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 179.

shown, in the *Verrines* Cicero repeatedly portrays the Sicilians as Rome's clients in order to highlight how far the corrupt former governor Verres had neglected his patronal duty of care: "Sicily was the first of all foreign peoples to place itself in the friendship and good faith of the Roman people" (*se ad amicitiam fidemque populi Romani applicavit*) – the phrase referring to the process of becoming a *cliens*.[98] The model for proper imperial relations here is quite clearly that of *patronus-cliens*, but there is evidence to suggest that in other areas of Roman imperial thought it is the *patronus-libertus* relationship that provides the conceptual blueprint for Rome's dealings with foreign peoples, a point which may have been overlooked in the modern classical historiography.[99] During discussions with ambassadors of Antiochus III in 193 BCE, Livy's Flamininus explains that, whereas Antiochus III seeks to "re-enslave" (*repetere in servitutem*) the Greek cities, the Romans have "undertaken the patronage of the freedom of the Greeks" (*susceptum patrocinium libertatis Graecorum*).[100] Flamininus continues that the Roman people had "liberated" (*liberavit*) Greece from Philip V and now plans to "liberate" (*liberare*) the Greek cities in Asia currently under Antiochus.[101] And when reporting the outcome of these negotiations to the ambassadors of the Greek cities, Flamininus reassures them that the Romans will "claim" (*vindicaturum*) the Greeks' "*libertas*" from Antiochus with the same "virtue" and

[98] Cic. *2Verr*. 2.2. Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 190–93.

[99] In *Foreign Clientelae* Badian incorporates the *patronus-libertus* relationship into a generic patron-client model and therefore does not consider its specific deployment in Roman imperial discourse. Lavan notes that Hellenistic monarchs are sometimes depicted as former masters and the Greeks as freedmen, but does not detect in the sources any claim that the Roman people exercises a form of rule resembling *patronatus*. Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 119–21

[100] Livy 34.58.10–11.

[101] Livy 34.58.13.

"*fides*" with which they had "claimed" (*vindicaverit*) it from Philip.[102] Livy's choice of the verb *vindicare*, deployed within this context of a dispute between the *populus Romanus* and Hellenistic monarchs styled as *domini* about the free or servile status of foreign peoples, may be calculated to evoke the image of the *causa liberalis*, or perhaps even the *manumissio vindicta*.[103] If this is his intimation, then although Livy talks of *patrocinium*, the Roman claim would in fact appear to be closer to one of *patronatus*; the Romans' "*patrocinium libertatis Graecorum*" looks more like the "*patronatus libertatis libertorum*," the patronage of the liberty of freed slaves.[104] In any case, Livy is undoubtedly tackling here an awkward conceptual issue: he does not want to identify the Romans as ex-masters, but does want to view the Greeks as liberated slaves, and thus seemingly in need of a *patronus*. However, it is the Greeks' liberator, not their former *dominus*, who now appears to hold patronal rights over them

By far the most distinguished and, with respect to the Renaissance sources, influential classical appearance of *patrocinium* as an instrument of empire is in the second book of *De officiis*, where it receives Cicero's philosophical attention.[105] The concept appears embedded in a discussion of the methods by which it is possible "to embrace and retain the support of other men" (*hominum studia complectamur eaque teneamus*), and, more specifically, how humans can

[102]Livy 34.59.4–5.

[103] Lavan identifies the language of the *causa liberalis* in other Roman discussion of empire, but not here. Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 80–81.

[104] It is striking that the only other reference in Livy to the Roman imperial project as one of *patrocinium* also concerns the protection of the Greeks understood as a liberated people: Livy 37.54. On this passage, see Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 200–01.

[105] On Cicero's use of *patrocinium*, see Andrew R. Dyck, *A Commentary on Cicero,* De Officiis (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 401–02 and bibliography cited therein.

be made to "submit themselves to the command [*imperium*] or power [*potestas*] of another."[106] Cicero's broad aim here is to drive home the famous point that one is most likely to secure power through love and least likely to do so through fear.[107] While some subjects, such as slaves, must be kept in a state of fear and mastered by force (*vis*) and savagery (*saevitia*), rule by fear is entirely inappropriate in a "*civitas libera*."[108] To demonstrate that governmental authority (*vis imperii*) cannot be lasting if built on fear, Cicero piles up examples of failed regimes from Sicily and Greece before turning his gaze on Rome's empire:

> As long as the empire [*imperium*] of the Roman People was maintained through acts of kind service [*beneficia*] and not through injustices [*iniuriae*], wars were waged either on behalf of allies or about imperial rule; … the senate was a haven and refuge for kings, for peoples and for nations; moreover, our magistrates and generals yearned to acquire the greatest praise from one thing alone, the fair [*aequitas*] and faithful [*fides*] defence of our provinces and of our allies. In this way we could more truly have been titled a protectorate [*patrocinium*] than an empire [*imperium*] of the world.[109]

Although later in the book Cicero will testify to the inescapable asymmetry of the patron-client relationship, noting that for elite Romans "accepting patronage [*patrocinium*] or being labelled as clients [*clientes*] is tantamount to death,"[110] here he maintains that patronage is not only appropriate in foreign affairs, but it is in fact the essence of best imperial practice. Indeed, once

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[106] Cic. *Off*. 2.19 and 2.22. Translation from Cicero, *On Duties*, ed. M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 69 and 70.

[107] Cic. *Off*. 2.23.

[108] Cic. *Off*. 2.24.

[109] Cic. *Off*. 2.26–27, p. 72.

[110] Cic. *Off*. 2.69, p. 91. Translation slightly modified.

Roman imperialism had departed from its patronal model and become characterized by acts of injustice (*iniuriae*), the vices in the provinces were imported to domestic politics, leading to civil war and eventually the loss of the *res publica* itself.[111]

As Schofield has shown, Cicero's deployment of *patrocinium* here helps him further refine his solution to a problem which had arisen in the grand philosophical project he had pursued in *De legibus* and *De republica*: how to reconcile justice with empire?[112] In Book Three of *De republica* Cicero has two of the dialogue's interlocutors present cases against and then for the virtue of justice, thus recalling the famous pair of pro and contra speeches on the same topic given in Rome in 155 BCE by the skeptic philosopher Carneades.[113] A central argument for the prosecution seems to have been that without injustice there can be no empire; imperialism is intrinsically unjust as it involves one group of humans ruling over another as slaves. Although, as Lavan has now demonstrated beyond any doubt, the Romans were often relaxed about describing submission to their imperial rule as slavery, Schofield points out that it would be quite another matter for them to acknowledge that Rome's *imperium* was an offence to justice, and Cicero commits the speaker Laelius to rebutting this charge. Most of Laelius's defence does not survive, and a portion of it only in the Vatican palimpsest discovered in 1820. It is important from our perspective, however, that some of the key passages—or summaries of them—on the question of imperial justice were available to Renaissance readers through their transmission in the works of, among other authorities, Lactantius and Augustine.

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[111] Cic. *Off*. 2.27–29.

[112] The following summarizes Schofield, "Cosmopolitanism, Imperialism and Justice," 17–30.

[113] See especially Cic. *Rep*. 3.33–41. Schofield does his best to extract a coherent philosophical argument from the third book of *De republica* while faced with the problem of its fragmentary state.

From Augustine's summary in *De civitate Dei*, it appears that Laelius begins his speech by arguing that if Roman *imperium* does indeed have an enslaving dimension, then this does not necessarily mean it is unjust. The Aristotelian solution would be to posit the category of natural slaves and argue that it is in such people's interests to have a master: as Aristotle notes in the *Politics*, "where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals, … the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master."[114] And Laelius seems to have made a similar point with reference to Rome's *imperium*:

> The reply on the side of justice was that it [i.e. enslavement under imperial rule] is just because for such humans [i.e. the enslaved] slavery is advantageous, and is instituted for their advantage, when it is rightly instituted: that is when the license to do injury [*iniuriarum licentia*] is taken away from the wicked, and they will be better off conquered because they were worse off unconquered.[115]

But Cicero is not content to let the case rest here and introduces the idea, which also appears to be adapted from Aristotle, that there exist harsher and softer gradations of subjection. Augustine quotes in *Contra Julianum* Laelius's words:

> Different types of ruling [*imperandi*] and being subject [*serviendi*] must be recognized. The mind is said to rule over the body, and is also said to rule over appetite; but it rules the body the way a king rules his citizens or a parent his children, while it rules appetite the way a master rules his slaves, in that it restrains and breaks it. The rule of kings and generals and magistrates and senators [*patres*] and peoples presides over citizens and

[114] Aristotle, *Politics* 1.5. Translation from Aristotle, *The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*, ed. Stephen Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17.

[115] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 19.21 = Cic. *Rep*. 3.36. This and the following translation is based on Cicero, *On the Commonwealth*, ed. James E. G. Zetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 72–73, but incorporates some of Schofield's amendments.

> allies [*civibus sociisque*] in the way that the mind rules bodies, while masters wear out their slaves in the way that the best part of the mind, i.e. wisdom, wears out the flawed and weak parts of that same mind, such as appetite, anger, and other disturbances.[116]

According to Schofield, the upshot of this line of argument is that Cicero wants us to find that Rome does not in fact rule its imperial subjects as a master rules his slaves, but rather as a father cares for his children. Schofield concedes that Laelius's reference here to "*civibus sociisque*" may have a restricting effect, thereby leaving open the possibility that Rome's non-citizen and non-allied subjects are indeed ruled as slaves.[117] But as Schofield maintains, it is unlikely that Cicero would have wanted to differentiate in this way in this particular text. While he was often happy to equate imperial subjection to Rome with servitude in his correspondence and political oratory,[118] this move clearly troubled Cicero as a philosopher. By outlining in *De officiis* the patron-client model of empire, Cicero was again attempting to tackle these philosophical concerns entangled with Rome's imperial project.

It is virtually inconceivable that early Florentine humanists like Salutati and Bruni could have failed to notice these lines of classical thinking, particularly given their almost obsessive desire to piece back together and scrutinize the entire Ciceronian corpus.[119] What is more,

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[116] Augustine, *Contra Julianum* 4.12.61 = Cic. *Rep.* 3.37.

[117] Schofield defends himself from this criticism in notes 27 and 31. This is an extremely important issue and one on which Schofield has forthcoming work.

[118] Lavan *Slaves to Rome*, 93–95, 112–13.

[119] For the manuscript evidence of Salutati's close engagement with various Ciceronian works, see Teresa De Robertis, Giuliano Tanturli, and Stefano Zamponi, eds., *Coluccio Salutati e l'invenzione dell'Umanesimo* (Florence: Mandragora, 2008). Salutati demonstrably copied or annotated, among other Ciceronian texts, *De legibus* (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XXIX.199), some of the *Epistulae ad familiares* (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 49.7 and Plut. 49.18), and various orations, including the four *Catilinarians* (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 23sin.03).

Cicero's attempts to defend the justice of the Roman free state exercising its imperial rule over other peoples and states could hardly have appeared any more salient to the humanists in the Florentine chancery as they looked out over Florence's growing *dominium*. We shall now see how the leading Florentine humanists applied and adapted Roman, and particularly Ciceronian, solutions while facing their own challenge of harmonizing liberty, empire, and justice.

II. EARLY FLORENTINE HUMANISM AND THE IMPERIAL PROTECTORATE

I now want to turn to a group of humanist texts, which remains at the centre of a well-known and, it must be said, well-worn historiographical debate, to consider some of the roles that the classical concepts I have been discussing were allocated in early Renaissance political thought. While Baron famously emphasized the importance of the wars of the 1390s between Florence and the Milanese Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti for the genesis of the early works of "civic humanism,"[120] Hörnqvist is right to say that we actually need to go back to at least the middle of that century if we are to unearth the roots of the ideological issues at stake.[121] It is true that in the previous century Florence's modest territorial gains came buttressed with some grandiose ideological arguments about the city's supposed relationship to Rome. As Nicolai Rubinstein demonstrated long ago in a classic article, this theme was already present, albeit in an inchoate

[120] Baron, *The Crisis.*

[121] Mikael Hörnqvist, "Two Myths of Civic Humanism," 113.

form, in the firmly medieval *Chronica de origine civitatis* (c. 1200).[122] However, we have noted that the crucial explanatory context for the development of Florentine imperial discourse expressed in a specifically *humanist* idiom begins to form around 1350, at which point Florence started methodically absorbing into its *dominium* formerly independent Tuscan communities, including some *civitates*. It thus became increasingly pressing for Florence to find some plausible way of convincing its foreign subjects that despite technically being under Florentine *ius*, *potestas*, and even *dominium*, their *libertas* was preserved.

As Petrarch's leading disciple in Florence, Salutati had with other humanists helped place at the republic's disposal an array of both canonical and newly-rehabilitated sources of Roman imperial thinking which could guide Florentine attempts to address the ideological issues surfacing in the *dominium*. One group of sources that would come to have a particular prominence in humanist debates about the legitimacy of Florence's growth—supplying not just a literary format but also argumentative and conceptual content—was Cicero's speeches. Much of Cicero's oratorical corpus had remained largely unknown during the Middle Ages and a number of speeches only began to be reintroduced to learned audiences from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards following Petrarch's sensational manuscript discoveries.[123] These classical materials were also available, however, to Florence's ideological rivals.

At the time of the Florentine-Milanese wars, the Visconti chancellor Antonio Loschi was a leading authority on Ciceronian oratory, having recently produced an influential commentary-

[122] Nicolai Rubinstein, "The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence: A Study in Mediaeval Historiography," *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 198–227, at 212–13. See also Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 44–45.

[123] On the post-classical dissemination of the speeches, see R. H. Rouse and M. D. Reeve's path-breaking discussion in Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission*, 54–98.

cum-manual, the *Inquisitio artis in orationibus Ciceronis* (c. 1395).[124] Unsurprisingly, then, Loschi's *Invectiva in Florentinos* (1401), the work that initiated the polemical clash to which I now turn, is littered with indirect references to Cicero's speeches.[125] Loschi begins the *Invectiva* with a cascade of rhetorical questions, recalling Cicero's scathing opening to the first *Catilinarian*.[126] In associating the Florentine people with the treasonous Catiline, Loschi was launching a particularly damaging assault. As we shall see, Salutati had been arguing from as early as the 1370s that Florence enjoyed a Roman Republican foundation, and he will be concerned in his reply to Loschi to prove from the classical record that the city had its origin as a colony for Sulla's veterans. But Loschi was aware from reading his Cicero and Sallust that these colonists had supported Catiline's failed coup d'état. By echoing Cicero's vitriolic rhetoric, Loschi is thus ridiculing the Florentines' special claim to be of the Roman "*genus*," observing that, as "destroyers of the *patria* and disturbers of Italy's peace," the Florentines do indeed imitate their ancestors: the enemies of liberty and the instigators of civil war.[127]

Loschi also draws on Ciceronian oratory to fortify what is perhaps his principal argument: Florence's foreign policy does not amount to a defense of liberty, but rather "the cruelest tyranny" (*crudelissima tyrannis*).[128] Recycling Cicero's language of *libido* and

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[124] Peter Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric, 1360–1620* (Oxford: Oxford-Warburg Studies, 2011), 33–34.

[125] The dating of Loschi's text and Salutati's reply has proved contentious. I follow Baldassarri: Salutati, *Political Writings*, ed. Baldassarri and trans. Bagemihl, x–xi. Baldassarri has identified material extracted from the *Catilinarians*, *De domo sua*, *Pro Marcello*, the third *Philippic*, and the *Verrines.* Stefano U. Baldassarri, *La vipera e il giglio* (Rome: Aracne, 2012), 144–49.

[126] Cf. Loschi, "Invectiva," 144 and Cic. *Cat*. 1.1.

[127] "Vastatores patriae et quietis Italiae turbatores." Loschi, "Invectiva," 144.

[128] Loschi, "Invectiva," 144.

petulantia from the first *Verrine*,[129] Loschi accuses the Florentines of grossly abusing their subject population:

> What is sweeter than a bride and children? But how can they make for happiness when someone sees that he has prepared his nuptials to minister to another man's wantoness [*petulantia*], and given birth to children to satisfy a stranger's lust [*libido*]?[130]

Again by way of rhetorical analogy, Loschi compares the Florentines to another notorious figure from Roman Republican history; like a second Verres, the Florentine people has utterly neglected its duties with respect to its imperial dependents, despoiling and perversely oppressing those whom it should protect. Indeed, Loschi goes as far as claiming that Florence has "summoned Italy to servitude."[131] Consequently, those peoples over whom the Florentines hold a "cruel and greedy *imperium*" are waiting to "shake off that yoke of servitude."[132] As his example, Loschi selects the inhabitants of San Miniato, and in doing so presses on a delicate issue. After defeating Milanese partisans in the town in 1370, Florence sought to establish jurisdictional control over San Miniato and its hinterland, installing a 'Vicar'—that is an imperial governor— but at the cost of inciting public unrest.[133] According to a document made by a notary working for the Vicar, a coup of 1377 had aimed at removing San Miniato from the

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[129] Cf. Cic. *1Verr*. 14.

[130] "Quam tamen ex his sentire dulcedinem potest is qui se videt nuptias ad alterius petulantiam comparasse, liberos ad alienam libidinem procreasse?" Loschi, "Invectiva," 148.

[131] "Ad servitutem vocata Italia." Loschi, "Invectiva," 146.

[132] "In fortunas et corpora crudele et avarum habeatis imperium … cum tempus occasionemque prospexerint, excutiant iugum illud servitutis." Loschi, "Invectiva," 146. On the *iugum* as a typical image of chattel slavery in Roman imperial discourse, see Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 83–88.

[133] See Giuliano Pinto, *Toscana medievale: Paesaggi e realtà sociali* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1993), 51–65.

"jurisdiction, dominion, power, will, and obedience of the people and commune of Florence and the Guelf Party."[134] Moreover, a conspirator is on record comparing Florence to a "*crudelissimo tiranno*."[135] And San Miniato's inhabitants had attempted further revolt as recently as 1397. To save such servile populations from their plight, Loschi declares that an army under Milanese command will play the role of an *assertor libertatis*: ""they hope that, thanks to this army asserting their liberty, and by your fall into servitude, they will finally recover their former dignity, which they mourn you snatched from them."[136] Loschi's line of ideological attack is therefore to transform the geopolitical contest between Milan and Florence for hegemony in north-central Italy into a *causa liberalis*; Milan is to be the liberator of those whom Florence has unjustly enslaved.

When Salutati got around to replying to Loschi, Giangaleazzo Visconti's unexpected death in 1402 had already ended the war. The Florentine chancellor, however, still tasked himself with responding accusation by accusation to the *Invectiva*; a fact which must be explained not only by the classicizing sophistication of Loschi's text, but also by the worrying spotlight it had shone on the problem of the Florentine *dominium*. Salutati was forced to insist that Florence had not enslaved its Tuscan subjects; it had actually protected their freedom from the encroachment of Milanese tyranny.

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[134] "Terra Sancti Miniati non perseveraret set diverteret a iurisdictione, dominio, potestate, voluntate et obedientia populi et comunis Florentie et Partis Guelfe." Cited in Pinto, *Toscana medievale*, 61. (My translation.)

[135] Pinto, *Toscana medievale*, 61–62.

[136] "Sperant equidem hoc uno assertore suae libertatis exercitu, vobis prolapsis in servitutem, dignitatem pristinam, quam sibi per vos ereptam lugent, tandem esse recuperaturos." Loschi, "Invectiva," 146.

Salutati was well placed to make such a defense. Virtually as soon as he was elected Chancellor of Florence in 1375, he had begun addressing in his official correspondence themes of liberty, empire, and justice with reference to Roman antiquity. During the "War of the Eight Saints" (1375–78), Salutati deployed the *missive*, or public letter,[137] as a diplomatic weapon in his attempts to encourage other city-states to join Florence's cause against the papacy and its alliance with the "barbarian" French.[138] In doing so, he leveraged a range of classically-inspired arguments. In a letter of 1377, Salutati encouraged the inhabitants of Rome to rebel against their papal ruler, drawing a distinctly Ciceronian-Sallustian connection between domestic freedom and imperial expansion:

> Do not think … that your and our ancestors—for we boast of common parents—founded such a great and memorable empire while enslaved [*serviendo*] at home, nor that they did it by oppressing Italy with servitude either imposed from the outside or from within. Indeed, with the assistance of allies fighting for their liberty, the power of empire first set you over Italy, conquered Spain, overcame Africa … the desire of liberty alone created for the Romans empire, glory, and all their dignity.[139]

Although it is less clear what he thinks Rome's imperial progress entailed for peoples in other parts of the Mediterranean world, Salutati notes that the Romans kept Italy free. In another letter

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[137] On Salutati's contribution to the *missive* genre, see Ronald G. Witt, *Coluccio Salutati and his Public Letters* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976); Daniela De Rosa, *Coluccio Salutati: Il Cancelliere e il Pensatore Politico* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1980).

[138] For a brief summary of the war and Salutati's part in it, see Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, 126–32.

[139] "Non putetis … quod maiores vestri et nostri, communibus quidem parentibus gloriamur, serviendo domi, tantum tamque memorabile Imperii decus fundaverunt nec dimictendo suam Ytaliam sub externa vel domestica servitute. Illa quidem moles imperii, assistendo sociis et pro eorum libertate pugnando, vobis primo subegit Ytaliam, Yspaniam vicit, Affricam superavit … Solum itaque libertatis stadium et imperium et gloriam [et] omnem Romanis peperit dignitatem." B.R.F., 786, 139. Cited in Witt, *Coluccio Salutati*, 54. I quote Witt's translation.

sent to the Romans, Salutati went even further by underlining the point that the Roman Republic's global imperial project promoted both liberty and justice: "the *populus Romanus*, on account of its military strength, its just *imperium*, and the brilliance of its virtue, did not slavishly subjugate the entire world … but governed it with equal laws in the sweetness of liberty."[140] As we can see from the earlier reference to "*maiores vestri et nostri*," Salutati was arguing in this correspondence that the modern Romans and Florentines were in fact brothers, as both peoples could trace their descent back to the ancient *populus Romanus*. Indeed, less than a year after taking up the chancellorship, Salutati had declared that the Florentines were Romans since Rome was Florence's mother.[141] Again, this was an argument with a medieval pedigree, but one which Salutati re-elaborated in a humanist idiom.[142] In his early chancery writings, then, Salutati had already laid much of the ideological groundwork for the claim that Florence, like its parent Rome, would commit to ruling other Italians only in such a way that their liberty was preserved; this was what it meant to practice justice in the foreign arena, or at least within the confines of the Italian peninsula.

It is critical to note, however, that Salutati was well aware that Italy's history under the Roman Republic could be viewed in a very different light. In a *missive* of 1376, Salutati tried to persuade the people of Ancona to revolt against their papal overlord by reminding them of an earlier Roman attempt to dominate:

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[140] "Populum Romanum armorum viribus, iusto imperio et virtutum splendore totum orbem … non serviliter subegisse, sed equis legibus in libertatis dulcedine gubernasse." *Missive* 17, 117^{v}. Cited in De Rosa, *Coluccio Salutati*, 95. (My translation.)

[141] *Missive* 16, 67. Cited in Witt, *Coluccio Salutati*, 52.

[142] Rubinstein, "The Beginnings."

> Will you always stand in the darkness of slavery? Do you not consider … how sweet liberty is? Our ancestors, indeed the whole Italian race, fought for five hundred years in endless battles against the Romans so that liberty would not be lost. Nor could this leading people of the whole world subdue Italy with arms until they received almost all Italians into a confederacy [*in societatem imperii*], joining them in freedom to themselves by pacts and giving them citizenship. These men stood with great steadfastness in defense of liberty against people of the same nation.[143]

Here Salutati adopts the perspective of the Romans' Italian rivals: far from aiming to protect Italy's freedom, Rome had designs on enslaving its neighbours and kin. In fact, Salutati suggests that it was only the Italian peoples' mass armed resistance during the Social War that finally aligned Roman *imperium* with *libertas*. On this account, any notion that the Roman Republic's empire was inherently just must surely vanish. We thus have to conclude that Salutati presents two incompatible visions of the Roman past. It is, however, unreasonable to expect ideological purity, or even argumentative consistency, from Salutati in his public correspondence; he had to articulate different visions of the Roman inheritance according to his audience's expectations and his city's interests. But what is important to observe is that Salutati had clearly long been sensitive to the deeper classical resonances of the problem of liberty and empire, which Loschi had once again brought to the fore.

In his *Contra maledicum et obiurgatorem* (1403), Salutati accepts Loschi's challenge to consider the status of Florence's subject population within a conceptual framework supplied by

[143] "Stabitisne semper in tenebris servitutis? Non consideratis … quanta sit dulcedo libertatis? Maiores nostril, omne quidem genus italicum, quingentis annis contra Romanos continuatis proeliis, ne libertatem perderent, pugnaverunt. Nec potuit totius orbis princeps populus Italiam armis subigere donec in societatem imperii pene omnes Italos receperunt, iungentes eos sibi federibus libertate atque civitate donantes. Illa tanta Constantia contra eiusdem gentis populum pro libertate steterunt." *Missive*, 15, 47–48. Cited in Ronald G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 308. I quote Witt's translation.

Roman legal and moral thought. In the opening section of his speech, Salutati maintains that Florence is not only a "*civitas libera*," but also a "*vindex libertatis*."[144] Loschi is quite right to view the Florentine-Milanese conflict as a *causa liberalis*, but Salutati maintains that it is the Florentines who have vindicated Tuscan, and indeed Italian, liberty against the claims of mastery advanced by the Milanese *dominus*. When turning to Loschi's specific comments about the situation in the Florentine *dominium*, Salutati explains why it is so absurd to suggest that Florence's subjects are slaves:

> The subjects of the Florentines … are suffocated by tyranny and deprived of their former dignity? They, who were either born free with us or were adopted into sweet liberty from the difficulties of a wretched servitude? They long to shake off a yoke they do not have and, as you falsely declare, exchange the sweet bridle of liberty—which is to live justly and to obey laws to which all are subject—for the tyrannical yoke of your lord?[145]

As Hörnqvist has observed, the liberty that Salutati envisages here for Florence's subject population is not the "participatory form of freedom" normally associated with Florentine republicanism in the modern historiography.[146] For these peoples liberty consists in being part of of a political community whose laws bind *all* of its members; such a situation cannot be realized under a *dominus*, such as Giangaleazzo Visconti, "who controls everything by the judgement of

[144] Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 180.

[145] "Tyrannidene suffocantur aut dignitate pristina spoliati sunt Florentinorum subditi ... Qui sunt vel nobiscum in libertate nati vel de miserrimae servitutis angustiis in dulcedinem libertatis asciti? Num iugum excutere cupiunt, quod non habent, vel dulce libertatis frenum—quod est iure vivere legibusque, quibus omnes subiacent, oboedire—desiderant in tyrannicum domini tui iugum, ut arbitrari te simulas, commutare?" Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 230.

[146] Hörnqvist, "The Two Myths," 116–17; Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 53.

his will," [147] and who thereby refuses to subject himself to the laws. It does not consist, however, in their ability to shape or reform those laws.

Salutati entrenches his position by explaining that Florence's subjects may, either by birth, law, or gift, call themselves "Florentines," and to be a Florentine is, "by nature and by law, to be a Roman citizen and hence free and not a slave."[148] Citing material from Sallust, Cicero, and other classical authorities, Salutati goes to some lengths to demonstrate Florence's Roman Republican origins, although we should note that he does not tackle convincingly the issue of the ancient Florentines' role in the Catilinarian conspiracy;[149] a problem to which Bruni would later attend in the first pages of his *Historiae Florentini populi* (c. 1415–42).[150] In any case, Florence's historic connection to the Roman Republic is enough in Salutati's view to guarantee that Florentine subjects are automatically inducted into liberty. Again, as he does not make participation in the legislative process a necessary component of the conception of freedom he exhibits here, Salutati is able to bring into alignment—just as the Romans had been able to—citizenship, liberty, and subject status. The notion that Florence's subjects are awaiting the arrival of Milanese forces to regain their freedom is laughable: "to call a cruel tyrant's army an

[147] "Qui cuncta pro suae voluntatis moderatur arbitrio." Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 232.

[148] "Vel nativitate vel lege vel incremento donoque fortunae, quod quoniam nostri sint, se possint dicere Florentinos. Quid enim est Florentinum esse nisi tam natura quam lege civem esse Romanum et per consequens liberum et non servum?" Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 232.

[149] Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 200–14, and 206–09 for the awkward defense of the Catlinarian connection.

[150] Leonardo Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*, ed. and trans. James Hankins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 8–17. (Hereafter *Historiae.*) On Bruni's revisionist view of Florence's relationship to the Roman Republic, see above all Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 160–78.

assertor libertatis is more than ridiculous!"[151] Once more, Salutati's rhetorical and ideological strategy is to pick up the classical concepts introduced by Loschi, but then turn them back on his opponent. To claim that a tyrant aims to liberate the enslaved is meaningless; this is in fact the Florentine Republic's special mission.

Salutati further develops this defense when he comes to address Loschi's exemplification of San Miniato as an oppressed Florentine subject. He recounts the town's recent history as a transition "from servitude to liberty, … from the madness of civil war … to the sweetness of security and peace."[152] San Miniato's *populus*, Salutati reports, had previously been separated into factions and with growing intestinal disorder came a spike in acts of injustice.[153] Bernabò Visconti, Giangaleazzo's predecessor, exploited these developments and took control of the town. Salutati's point is that Florentine intervention was required to restore order in San Miniato and free it from Visconti domination. Now the claim that Florence involves itself in other communities' affairs only to cure the disease of factional conflict and thereby safeguard their liberty was not an entirely new one. Rubinstein showed that, from at least the middle of the fourteenth century, Florence had argued that it "liberated, or protected, from tyranny" many of its subject communities.[154] Moreover, a *missive* of 1385, probably written by Salutati himself,

[151] "Tyranni crudelis exercitum libertatis assertorem, quod sit plus quam ridiculum, appelare!" Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 232.

[152] "De servitute in libertatem, … de rabie civilis belli … in dulcedinem securitatis et pacis." Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 240.

[153] Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 242.

[154] Nicolai Rubinstein, "Florence and the Despots: Some Aspects of Florentine Diplomacy in the Fourteenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 2 (1952): 21–45, at 33.

pointed out to the Volterrans that the Florentine *maiores* "took your town under the protection of our commune, at a time when it was shaken by the discords of tyrants."[155]

But in his response to Loschi, Salutati more explicitly ties this line of argument into the Roman logic of the protectorate. He draws a parallel between Florence's expulsion of Milanese supporters from San Miniato and Flamininus's liberation of the Greek *civitates* from the yoke of Philip V.[156] We then find him concluding that the Florentines, like a modern-day Flamininus, have taken up the protection of San Miniato: "Once we had received that town into our protection and *fides* … no episodes of revolt by the inhabitants ever took place afterward … and they always stayed faithful."[157] The phrase "*in fidem protectionemque recepimus*," coupled with the reference to Flamininus's liberation of the Greeks, indicates that Salutati is redeploying here the classical intellectual resources centred on the concept of patronage that we have seen put to use in Roman imperial discourse.[158] The protectorate, then, is formed on a promise made by a hegemon to prevent weaker parties from suffering injury at the hands of agents operating both inside and outside their states. In return, the hegemon can expect those it protects to remain loyal. Although it is striking that Salutati does not once say in his oration that Florence holds *imperium* over its Tuscan subjects, it is perhaps more significant that he does not attempt to

[155] "Maiores nostros urbem vestram tunc sub tirannorum discordia fluctuantem, non minus servitutis certam, quam avidam libertatis, in nostri communis protectionem, libertatis donande vobis gratia suscepisse. *Missive* 20, 138[r]. Cited, along with the English translation I quote, in Rubinstein, "Florence and the Despots," 33–34.

[156] Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 246.

[157] "Semel Dei digito castrum illud in fidem protectionemque recepimus … nulla per Dei gratiam umquam oppidanorum rebellio fuit secuta, sed semper in fide manserunt." Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 251.

[158] Salutati later gestures towards an important passage from *De officiis* when discussing Giangaleazzo's failure to prosecute a just war: Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 272 and Cic. *Off*. 1.2.35.

refute Loschi's claim to the contrary. The case of San Miniato would seem instructive: after being received into Florentine *fides*, subject communities are best understood in Roman Republican terms as formerly unfree states whose liberty now depends on Florence's patronal protection.

The justificatory defense of Florentine imperialism within the classical conceptual parameters I have been outlining emerges as one of Leonardo Bruni's primary concerns in his *Laudatio Florentinae urbis*, the touchstone for modern interpretations of pre-Machiavellian "civic humanism." Others have noted that Bruni's most radical move in the *Laudatio* was to suggest that the Florentine people—whose origins lie in the Republican period of Roman history, and thus before the emperors had extinguished the Roman people's *libertas*—had inherited from the *populus Romanus* the right to global *dominium*. However, some of the principal Roman legal concepts underpinning Bruni's case have not yet been uncovered. Moreover, accompanying the Florentine people's *de iure* claim to *dominium* came a supporting and equally important moral claim, which, as James Hankins now points out, has received only limited scholarly attention.[159] Although Bruni's overarching argument for the legitimacy of Florentine *dominium* may have a hybrid character, the specifically Roman aspects of its intellectual lineage still require some emphasis.

After having praised in the first section of his speech the physical qualities of Florence and its territory, Bruni focuses his attention on the Florentine people themselves. When informing the Florentines about their origins, Bruni declares that the "the Roman people, the

[159] James Hankins, "Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio Florentine urbis*, Dante, and 'Virtue Politics,'" *Bullettino dell' Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 119 (forthcoming 2018): 1–25.

conqueror and *dominus* of the globe, is your *auctor*."[160] This last term, translated in the *Laudatio*'s rather treacherous modern English edition simply as "founder," [161] has several technical meanings in Roman law. The *Digest* glosses *auctor* as the person from whom a right (*ius*) is derived, for instance, the vendor in a property transaction or the testator named in a will.[162] And Bruni proceeds to amplify these legal resonances of *ius* and ownership at the next stage of his argument. As the *populus Romanus* is their *auctor*, to the Florentines "belongs by a certain kind of hereditary right *dominium* of the globe, as if a possession forming part of your paternal property."[163] Alison Brown has argued that Bruni judiciously avoids claiming for Florence a hereditary right to *imperium* for fear of trespassing on the Holy Roman Emperor's prerogatives.[164] Although in this period the Florentines labeled their territorial state a *dominium* and not an *imperium*, this was still a juridical space, as Brown herself makes clear, in which Florence claimed to wield *imperium* over subject communities.[165] This being so, even if he is

[160] "Vobis autem populus Romanus, orbis terrarum victor dominusque, est auctor." Leonardo Bruni, *Laudatio Florentine urbis*, ed. Stefano U. Baldassarri (Florence: Sismel, 2000), 15. My translations of the *Laudatio* revise Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt, eds., *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 135–75.

[161] Kohl and Witt, *The Earthly Republic*, 149.

[162] "Auctor meus a quo ius in me transit." *Digest* 50.17.175.

[163] "Viri Florentini, dominium orbis terrarum iure quodam hereditario ceu paternarum rerum possessio pertinet." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 15.

[164] Brown, "Language of Empire," 32–47, at 32–33. Giorgio Chittolini, however, rightly questions this view and downplays any hesitancy on Bruni's part to claim *imperium* for Florence. Giorgio Chittolini, "Dominant Cities," in *The Medici: Citizens and Masters*, ed. Robert Black and John E. Law (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015), 13–26, at 14 and 20.

[165] Brown, "Language of Empire," 33 with n. 5. For Bruni's claims of sovereign power for Florence, see Fubini, "La Rivendicazione."

prudent enough to moderate his language here,[166] Bruni is nevertheless contending that the Florentine people's supposedly direct descent from the *populus Romanus* constitutes a compelling legal argument in favour of its right to exercise both *dominium* and *imperium* over others; a right which need not be mediated through the jurisdiction of the emperors and their medieval successors.

What is more, Bruni also makes a remarkable claim about the different types of relationship that other peoples had historically had with the *populus Romanus*:

> Who is there among men who would not acknowledge themselves protected by the Roman people? Indeed, what slave or freedman would compete for dignity with the freeborn children of his master or patron, or think he is to be preferred? It is therefore no trifling ornament for this city to have had such outstanding founders and *auctores* for itself and its people.[167]

Bruni divides here the peoples of the post-classical world into two groups: the Florentines, whom he identifies as the freeborn sons of the *populus Romanus*, and other peoples, whom the Romans had either conquered and made their slaves, or liberated and brought into their patronage. We now need to unpack the rich ideological claims that follow from this notional division of persons.

In the *Laudatio*'s next section Bruni softens the bellicose and domineering language that he had used to describe Roman imperialism as he turns to Florence's foreign policy. Like Salutati, Bruni chooses not to speak of Florence holding *imperium* over its subjects. Although the

[166] The terms "quodam" and "ceu" have a qualifying force absent from Benjamin G. Kohl's translation. Kohl and Witt, *The Earthly Republic*, 150.

[167] "Quis enim est hominum qui se a populo Romano non fateatur servatum? Quis autem servus vel libertus cum domini vel patroni liberis de dignitate contendat, aut se preferendum censeat? Non parum igitur ornamenti est huic urbi, tam claros ipsius ac sue gentis conditores auctoresque habuisse." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 15.

Florentine *civitas* as Rome's freeborn son and legal heir appears to be well within its rights to rule others as an imperial *dominus*, Bruni implies that it has also inherited from its parent a series of moral virtues, which when practiced render Florentine expansion an ethical enterprise:

> Florence imitated its *auctores* in every kind of virtue, so that in everyone's judgement it was by no means undeserving of such a name and inheritance … It gained growth and glory … not by surrounding itself with crimes and fraud, but by wise policies, by confronting dangers, by maintaining *fides*, integrity, moderation, and above all by undertaking the cause and *patrocinium* of weaker parties.[168]

Here we have the unmistakable reemergence of Cicero's description in *De officiis* of Roman *imperium* as *patrocinium*.[169] And explicitly patronal language appears twice more in this section of the text, both times in the context of the Florentines' unique imperial mission of providing protection to the weak. Bruni claims that the Florentine *civitas* has "guarded [*tutatur*] others in times of danger, who necessarily acknowledge it as their *patrona*,"[170] and has "undertaken dangers for the safety and liberty of others and guarded many with its *patrocinium*."[171] Furthermore, Bruni states that Florence "has always defended the weak, as if it considered it its duty [*ad curam suam pertinere*] to ensure than no people in Italy would ever suffer destruction."[172] It should now be plain that in these passages Bruni is exploiting and recombining

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[168] "Auctores suos omni genere virtutis imitata est ut omnium iudicio haud indignam se prestiterit tanto nomine tantaque successione … Eamque amplitudinem atque gloriam adepta est non … rursus sceleribus accincta et fraudibus, sed magnitudine consilii, susceptione periculorum, fide, integritate, continentia maximque tenuiorum causa patrocinioque suscepto." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 19.

[169] Hankins also notes Bruni's debts to *De officiis*. Hankins, "Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio*," 12–13.

[170] "Civitas in periculis alios tutatur, eam fateantur patronam necesse est." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 24.

[171] "Pro aliorum salute ac libertate pericula adiret multosque suo patrocinio tutaretur." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 27.

[172] "Imbecilles omni tempore defendit, quasi ad curam suam pertinere existimaret ne quis Italie populus excidium pateretur." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 23.

the concepts of *patrocinium*, *tutela*, and *cura* in order to advance claims about Florence's relations with foreign peoples that are firmly anchored in Roman thought.

Furthermore, these arguments are lodged within an extended and markedly Ciceronian discussion of Florence's imperial virtues, said to include *humanitas*, *beneficentia*, *liberalitas*, and *fides*. Bruni asks "can this *civitas* that has undertaken so many and such great things for the benefit of foreigners not be called *beneficentissima*?"[173] To demonstrate why the answer this question calls for is a resounding 'no,' Bruni explains that peoples who are forced to flee their homeland make the journey to Florence as if the city were "a unique sort of refuge and means of protection for all" (*unicum refugium tutamenque cunctorum*); Florence thus serves as a surrogate "*patria*" for all the peoples of Italy.[174] Bruni appears to imply here that the refugees that Florence willingly accepts should be viewed as orphaned children, who, estranged from their *paterfamilias*, are fortunate enough to have the Florentine people step in as their *tutor*. It is true that Bruni tracks here a passage from Aelius Aristides' *Panathenaicus*, and the Greek text certainly supplied him with a loose formal model.[175] But Aristides' praise of Athens belonged to the second century CE, by which time the Athenians had been under Roman *imperium* for centuries. The *Panathenaicus* could therefore have little utility to Bruni as a source of ideological argument, particularly one about liberty; it is Florence's legal and moral relationship

[173] "Potest igitur que hec tot tantaque pro alienis comodis susceperit non beneficentissima appellari?" Bruni, *Laudatio*, 23.

[174] "Nec ullus est iam in universa Italia qui non duplicem patriam se habere arbitretur: privatim propriam unusquisque suam, publice autem Florentinam urbem." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 23.

[175] Antonio Santosuosso, "Leonardo Bruni Revisited: A Reassessment of Hans Baron's Thesis on the Influence of the Classics in the *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis*," in *Aspects of Late Medieval Government and Society: Essays Presented to J. R. Lander*, ed. J. G. Rowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 25–51.

to the free Roman Republic, and not to a subject Athens, that Bruni is at pains to demonstrate.[176] The open door that Florence offers refugees certainly recalls Cicero's comments in *De officiis* about the Roman senate providing a "*refugium*" for foreign peoples. Indeed, we need to see that Bruni's attempt to establish the humanitarian dimension of Florentine foreign policy, based on granting *beneficia* and repelling *iniuriae*, and generally behaving as a "*iustissima civitas*,"[177] is essentially an elaboration of the Ciceronian moral theory of empire from Book Two of *De officiis*, a text which Bruni demonstrably had at his fingertips while composing the *Laudatio*.[178]

Bruni goes on to fuse these ethical claims with the juridical arguments he had laid out earlier. Although he celebrates some of Florence's military victories as shining examples of Florentine "*virtus*," Bruni remains careful to avoid the language of domination and servitude when discussing the republic's foreign interventions.[179] While other Italian peoples, when considered in a *longue-durée* perspective reaching back into Roman antiquity, have shown a propensity to succumb to servitude, the Florentines, due to their genealogical connection to the *populus Romanus*, have a duty to protect the liberty of others: "Florence knew that to be of Roman descent was to fight against enemies for the liberty of Italy."[180] The Florentine *populus* may have inherited from the Roman people the legal claim and martial prowess to rule Italy, and perhaps even the entire world, as a *dominus*, but it has chosen instead to play the roles of

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[176] I thank Peter Stacey for this point.

[177] Bruni, *Laudatio*, 24.

[178] Bruni, *Laudatio*, 24, quoting Cic. *Off.* 3.108.

[179] Bruni is happy to boast that the Florentine people has "struck down" (*prostravit*) the Sienese and "destroyed" (*delevit*) the Pisans in war, but avoids saying that Florence enslaved these peoples. Bruni, *Laudatio*, 27.

[180] "Sciebat enim generis esse Romani, pro libertate Italie contra hostes pugnare." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 28.

benefactor, guardian, patron, and liberator while presiding over what Bruni invites us to see as its imperial protectorate.

CHAPTER 2

The Development of Humanist Imperial Thinking in Fifteenth-Century Florence: Leonardo Bruni's Historiae Florentini populi

Leonardo Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi* (c. 1415–42) represents the most complete statement in a humanist idiom of the Florentine Republic's official ideology in the fifteenth century. Bruni's extensive treatment in this text of Florence's imperial question—that is to say the relationship between the republic and the population of its expanding subject territory—means that the *Historiae* must occupy centre stage in any study of the place of empire within Quattrocento Florentine political thought. Producing the twelve books of the *Historiae* was a major undertaking for Bruni, occupying him for more than twenty-five years. He began the project in 1415, and had completed the first six books by 1428. From 1427 onwards, Bruni was writing his history as Chancellor of Florence, a position he held until his death in 1444. The final six books were completed by 1442, after which the Florentine *signoria* had the work deposited in the Palazzo Vecchio alongside the republic's spoils of war.[181] Bruni, a native of Arezzo, was

[181] Baron established dates of composition for the first six books of the *Historiae*: Baron, *The Crisis*, 611, n. 14 and 618–19, n. 4. See also James Hankins' abbreviated chronology: *Historiae*, xi.

compensated for his labours by the Florentine state as early as 1416, when he was granted Florentine citizenship and exemption from taxation.[182]

Bruni's work as a historiographer, then, was always bound up with the Florentine state's ideological self-fashioning.[183] Although, as I argue in what follows, we do not find a completely static ideological vision across the twelve books of the *Historiae*, it is clear that the concept of liberty is central to Bruni's concerns in the text. As James Hankins puts it in the introduction to his edition of the work, "political liberty is the key concept in Bruni's *History*, and refers both to independence from foreign rule and to internal self-rule."[184] But here in a sense lies the problem: if Bruni wanted to celebrate Florentine liberty conceived of in this way, how did he handle the Florentine people's behaviour as a foreign actor at those historical moments when, on these terms, it appeared to have infringed on the liberty of other peoples and states? Hankins and other scholars have recognized that in the *Historiae* Bruni is at times quite willing to praise Florence's imperial successes and to identify the glory associated with territorial expansion as an important civic virtue.[185] But the deeper conceptual and ideological problem for Bruni is the relationship between liberty and empire. Bruni himself signals that the issue is going to be of crucial

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[182] Gordon Griffiths, James Hankins, and David Thompson, eds., *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York, 1987), 36.

[183] Gary Ianziti has recently underlined that, since he was producing a work of state-sponsored history, Bruni would have been expected to "express the aspirations and ethos of those in power." Gary Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy. Leonardo Bruni and the Use of the Past* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 101.

[184] *Historiae*, xvii.

[185] Donald J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 88–89; Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 61–64; James Hankins, "A Mirror for Statesmen: Leonardo Bruni's *History of the Florentine People*" (Unpublished paper, Harvard University, 2007): 1–31, at 3–5; Ianziti, *Writing History*, 125–27.

importance. Even though, in the end, the elderly Bruni would bring the *Historiae* to a close with the death of Giangaleazzo Viconti in 1402, in the preface he remarks that the culmination of the historical process that he is about to describe will be Florence's conquest of Pisa in 1406. He describes Pisa as "another Carthage," and thus immediately invites the comparison between Florence and Rome.[186] Bruni thus sets up an explicitly classicized framework in which we should understand his treatment of liberty and empire: Florence, like Rome, will grow to be an imperial power which eclipses its rivals. The extent to which Bruni wants to present Florence as repeating in its foreign affairs a Roman Republican pattern of imperial relations is the central question that I seek to answer in this chapter.

In doing so, I build on a body of scholarship concerned with the *Historiae* which goes back more than half a century to the pioneering studies of Berthold Ullman and Hans Baron.[187] Subsequent work on the *Historiae* has focused on, among other themes, Bruni's literary style and scholarly method as Florence's first humanist historian,[188] his use of source material,[189] his

[186] *Historiae*, *proemium* 1, p. 2.

[187] B. L. Ullman, "Leonardo Bruni and Humanist Historiography," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 4 (1946): 45–61; Baron, *The Crisis*.

[188] Wilcox, *The Development*, 1–129; Hans Baron, "Bruni's *Histories* as an Expression of Modern Thought," in Hans Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, vol. 2 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 68–93. For an overview of methodological developments in early humanist historiography, see E. B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 3–31. For the earlier Florentine chronicle tradition, see Louis Green, *Chronicle into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine Fourteenth-Century Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

[189] Antonio La Penna, "Il significato di Sallustio nella storiografia e nel pensiero politico di Leonardo Bruni," in Antonio La Penna, *Sallustio e la rivoluzione romana* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1968), Appendix I, 409–31; Anna Maria Cabrini, "Le *Historiae* del Bruni: risultati e ipotesi di una ricerca sulle fonti," in *Leonardo Bruni, cancelliere della repubblica di Firenze*, ed. Paolo Viti (Florence: Olschki, 1990), 247–319.

rhetorical performance in the text,[190] and his ideological commitments.[191] But scholars have only recently begun to consider in any kind of sustained way how Bruni handles the question of empire in the *Historiae*, with the majority of attention falling on his account of the history of Roman Italy in Book One (completed in 1415).

It is clear that underpinning Bruni's treatment of the Florentine people's relations with its Italian neighbours is a radically revised analysis of Florence's—and indeed all Italy's—historical relationship to Rome. That Bruni was doing something rather unorthodox with Florence's ancient history in the opening sections of Book One of the *Historiae* was sensed by Baron in *The Crisis*. Baron registered Bruni's "realization that Italy, and in particular ancient Etruria, had been covered with independent city-states, and that much of this flowering life was subdued by Rome's ascendency but rose again after the destruction of the *Imperium Romanum*."[192] But Baron argued that Bruni ended up falling back on ideas introduced in the *Laudatio* to impose some order on this novel historical vision: the Roman monarchy was again to blame for the suppression of Italian liberty, and the Florentines' descent from the free *populus Romanus* remained the source of their love of freedom. This interpretation does not bear scrutiny. Bruni's account in Book One of the *Historiae* of Florentine and Italian history under Rome does indeed represent a sharp break from the more naïve version that he offered in the *Laudatio*, a work

[190] Nancy S. Struever, *The Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), 101–43; Nicolai Rubinstein, "Il Bruni a Firenze: retorica e politica," in *Leonardo Bruni, cancelliere della repubblica*, ed. Viti, 15–28.

[191] Ianziti, *Writing History*, 91–46 and 204–33.

[192] Baron, *The Crisis*, 53.

which he would later look back on as a piece of juvenilia, a "childish game" (*puerilis ludus*).[193] In the *Historiae*, Bruni confronts with a new seriousness the long-lasting historical consequences that the Roman Republic's imperial growth had for the peoples of Italy. Ricardo Fubini and J. G. A. Pocock have delineated this problem of liberty and empire that Bruni created for himself.[194] Fubini puts his finger on the issue when he notes that "the image at the beginning of the work of the Italian cities subject to Rome prefigures implicitly that of the Tuscan cities subject to Florence in a historical cycle completely new and modern."[195] I now want to flesh out both phases of this cycle by considering what Bruni thinks it meant for the ancient Italians to be subjected to the Roman Republic, and what it meant for peoples in the Florentine *dominium* to be subjected to Florence. In Part One I examine Bruni's reconsideration in Book One of the *Historiae* of the problem of empire in Italy's political development since pre-Roman antiquity. With this backdrop in place, I turn in Part Two to his treatment of Florence's foreign policy in the work's subsequent books.

I. EMPIRE AND SUBJECTION IN BOOK ONE OF BRUNI'S *HISTORIAE*

Thus Bruni begins the *Historiae*:

> The founders of Florence were Romans sent by Lucius Sulla to Faesulae. They were his veterans who had given him outstanding service in the civil war as well as in other wars,

[193] Bruni, *Epistolarum*, ed. Mehus, vol. 2, 8.4, pp. 110–15, at 111.

[194] Fubini, "La Rivendicazione;" Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 160–78.

[195] Fubini, "La Rivendicazione," 174. (My translation.)

> and he granted them part of the territory of Faesulae … Why new colonists were sent to this area, however, must be explained.[196]

We saw in Chapter One that in the *Laudatio* Bruni attributed great ideological significance to the fact that Florence was founded as a colony under the Roman Republic. But he had remained vague in the earlier text about the precise moment of the city's origin, revealing only that it must date to sometime at the end of the Late Republic: "sacred and untrampled liberty was still thriving, which soon after the founding of this colony was to be stolen by those most wicked thieves [i.e. the Roman emperors]."[197] It was enough for Bruni at that stage in his intellectual and ideological development simply to claim that Florence had been founded when Rome was still free, and that the Florentine people had thus been able to inherit from the free *populus Romanus*––its parent and *auctor*—a love of liberty and the right to *dominium* and *imperium*. Here in the opening passages of the *Historiae*, however, Bruni fixes Florence's foundation within the context of the aftermath of the Social War (91–87 BCE).

As we also observed in the previous chapter, this chronology had already been established by Salutati in his response to Loschi. Salutati noted that "Florence was built by the Romans in opposition to the Fiesolans, who were famously hostile to the Romans," adding that

[196] "Florentiam urbem Romani condidere a Lucio Sylla Faesulas deducti. Fuerunt autem hi Syllani milites, quibus ob egregiam cum in ceteris tum in civili bello navatam operam, pars Faesulani agri est attributa … Quae autem occasio fuerit novos colonos in haec loca deducendi, pro rei notitia aperiendum est." *Historiae* 1.1, p. 8. The English translations of the *Historiae* largely follow Hankins' in this edition, although I make some revisions to communicate more precisely Bruni's conceptual language.

[197] "Sancta et inconcussa libertas, que tamen, non multo post hanc coloniam deductam, a sceleratissimis latronibus sublata est." Bruni, *Laudatio*, 16.

Fiesole was destroyed in the Social War.[198] We saw that Salutati buttressed his argument with Cicero's and Sallust's testimony that Sulla founded colonies around Fiesole, one of which, he reasoned, must have been Florence. However, Salutati seems to have sensed some years earlier that this historical context could have some awkward ideological ramifications. In a letter of 1395 addressed to the Roman people, he noted that Florence was founded "as a defense of the Roman name and rule in this place [i.e. Etruria] because of the frequent rebellions of the Tuscans. Having confiscated lands from the Fiesolans, they sent noble Roman citizens to inhabit the city."[199] Moreover, Donato degli Albanzani, the humanist chancellor of the Marquess of Este, later pointed out to Salutati in a letter of 1398 that Florus recorded in his *Epitome* that Sulla sold Florence (*Florentia*) at auction in 82 BCE to punish the city for having sided with Marius in the civil war.[200] This point seems to have been too troublesome for Salutati even to register; it is entirely absent from his *Contra maledicum*. Salutati could thus see in the classical sources that Tuscany had proved to be virtually ungovernable in the early first century BCE and that Fiesole, the city most intimately connected to ancient Florence, was a key protagonist in this story of civil conflict. Salutati's most complete solution to the problem of how to fit Florence into this narrative, which he presented in his response to Loschi, was to see Florence's foundation as a Roman colonial policy designed to pacify Etruria. In this way Salutati could maintain that the

[198] "Urbem nostram opificium esse Romanum oppositum Faesulanis, quos Romanis fuisse contrarios et adversos." Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 204.

[199] "Urbem nostram Romani nominis et imperii propugnaculum hoc sub celo contra crebras Tuscorum rebellions decreto public construxissent et Fesulanis agro multatis nobiles cives Romanos ad implenda menia transmiserint." *Missive* 24, 120. Latin text and English translation cited from Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, 248–49.

[200] Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, p. 250. Albanzani cites Flor. 2.9.

Florentines did indeed descend from free Roman citizens, albeit citizen colonists supporting what looked like a military occupation. This interpretation of the Florentines' ancestry was quite plainly problematic in light of the issues of freedom and subjection occurring within the Florentine *dominium*. Florence's connection to the Catilinarian conspiracy no doubt threatened to take much of the shine off Salutati's attempts to celebrate the city's Roman pedigree; both Cicero and Sallust mention that the environs of ancient Fiesole served as a recruiting ground for Catiline's rebellion against the Roman state.[201] Nonetheless, it was the ties to Sulla and his programme of suppressing liberty in Roman *Italia* which had the capacity to produce a full-blown ideological crisis for the Florentine imperial republic.

This is the ideological problem that Bruni attempts to defuse in the opening sections of the *Historiae*. As mentioned, like Salutati before him, Bruni sees that Florence's foundation must be connected in some way to the drama of the Social War. But unlike his predecessor, Bruni gives a description of the conflict. He notes that the peoples of Italy had not been properly rewarded for helping the Romans "expand [their] *imperium*." Consequently, they petitioned for access to Rome's honours and magistracies, "as if they were limbs of the state [*quasi civitatis membra*]."[202] The Romans of course refused, precipitating the Social War. Importantly, Bruni records that the Romans showed a savagery in victory, particularly in Tuscany, where they devastated cities and confiscated property. The cities that suffered included Arretium (Arezzo) and Faesulae (Fiesole), which, Bruni notes, were left virtually uninhabited. It was in this desolate

[201] Cic. *Cat*. 2.14–ff.; Sall. *Cat*. 28.

[202] *Historiae* 1.2, p. 8.

landscape that Sulla planted his colonies. The veterans he sent to repopulate Faesulae would soon migrate to the plain below and found Florence.

Now it seems that Bruni's source for his brief sketch of the Social War is Florus.[203] Among the considerable textual evidence that Bruni tracks Florus here is the deployment in both texts of the striking image of the Italians as "members" or "limbs" (*membra*) of a civil body. As Florus puts it:

> Since the Roman people united in itself the Etruscans, the Latins and the Sabines, and traces the same blood from all alike, it has formed a body made up of various members and is a single people composed of all these elements [*corpus fecit ex membris et ex omnibus unus est*]; and the allies, therefore, in raising a rebellion within the bounds of Italy, committed as great a crime as citizens who rebel within a city.[204]

Given this, Florus points out that "social" is in fact a poor choice of prefix for the conflict; it is better described as a "civil war." Florus is exploiting a contradiction here, for at the beginning of the conflict the Italians were of course *not* full Roman citizens, even if, as he suggests, they deserved to be. Writing from his perspective in the second century CE, Florus comments that it was perfectly just for the allies to demand "the rights of citizenship" (*ius civitatis*), yet the Romans nonetheless refused to recognize their Italian neighbours as fellow citizens. Bruni, then, would have seen in his source that at stake in the Social War was the issue of civic incorporation. Florus, however, does not mention in his miniaturized account that in 90 BCE Rome granted

[203] Flor. 2.6. As noted by Hankins: *Historiae*, p. 487 n. 5. For Bruni's possible classical and post-classical sources in the *Historiae*, see Cabrini, "Le *Historiae*"; Leonardo Bruni Aretino, *Histoire, eloquence et poèsie à Florence au début du Quattrocento*, ed. and trans. Laurence Bernard-Pradelle (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008), 64–70.

[204] Flor. 2.6.

citizenship via the *Lex Julia* to the Italian communities which had not rebelled, nor that full citizen status would eventually be extended to all Italian peoples after the war had ended. In seeming to follow Florus, Bruni also omits these facts.

It is hard to believe that Bruni was unaware that the Social War's most lasting consequence was the political unification of *Italia* under Roman government; there were available to him a number of other classical sources besides Florus which dealt with the conflict and its aftermath.[205] Moreover, we saw from his 1376 letter to the Anconans that Salutati, Bruni's mentor, seems to have known as much.[206] It is therefore significant that Bruni chose to depict Rome's treatment of the Italians as exclusionary and oppressive. There remains considerable debate among modern classicists about the Social War's causes and effects, a situation which arises in part from a rather confusing ancient historiographical picture. Indeed, Henrik Mouritsen has argued that two different views of the conflict appear to be present in the classical sources: "the war as a fight for citizenship," and "the war as a struggle against Roman domination."[207] Although, in relying on Florus, Bruni appears to be leaning more towards the former view, the direction in which the *Historiae* subsequently moves indicates that the issue of the Roman Republic's dominating presence in Italy is for him very much a live one. In this

[205] The most complete source is Appian, an author who was not available in Latin until Pier Candido Decembrio's translation of 1452–54. See Fryde, *Humanism*, 104. Bruni, however, seems to have been familiar with the *Historia Romana* in the original Greek, since there is evidence he used the text as a source in his *Cicero novus* of 1415: Bruni, *Histoire, eloquence et poèsie*, 399–400. Moreover, Pocock detects some Appianic elements in Bruni's account of the Social War: Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 161–63. For the other classical testimonies of the conflict, see Henrik Mouritsen, "Italian Unification: A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement* 70 (1998): 1–202, at 5–7.

[206] *Missive*, 15, 47–48.

[207] Mouritsen, "Italian Unification," 5.

sense, Bruni returns to the problem that Salutati touched on in his Ancona letter, in which he noted that the Italians waged a war of resistance against the Romans for five centuries. But Salutati had shelved this account in order to advance ideological arguments which depended on playing up Florence's Roman Republican ancestry. Bruni, then, reopened in the *Historiae* an abandoned seam of historiographical interpretation and, in doing so, disowned the prevailing ideological position on Florence's special relationship to Rome – one which in the *Laudatio* he himself had helped cement.

After describing Florence's colonial origins, Bruni turns to the ancient Florentines' part in the Catilinarian conspiracy. Whereas Salutati had rather clumsily defended the good character of the Florentine elements in Catiline's army, Bruni is more faithful to the Ciceronian and Sallustian narratives.[208] He explains that Sulla's veterans failed to readjust to civilian life after they had prospered from the chaos of civil war; they succumbed to luxury, then debt, and finally to Catiline, who represented a chance to profit once again from domestic upheaval and bloodshed.[209] Bruni thus introduces a new honesty into the official humanist account of Florence's connection to the Catilinarian moment.

Nevertheless, Bruni is concerned to find a way to spin this revised story. He observes that the Florentines learnt a salutary lesson from their experience: they put aside their "overpowering desire for new dictatorships and new booty" and came to see "luxury and prodigality as the road to ruin."[210] This moral revolution was an engine for material and demographic growth: "the city

[208] Salutati, "Contra maledicum," 204–08. Cic. *Cat*. 2.20; Sall. *Cat*. 28.

[209] *Historiae* 1.4–8, pp. 10–14.

[210] "Spe novarum dictaturarum praemiorumque quibus ante vehementius inhiabant deposita … luxuriam et prodigalitatem viam ad perniciem existimare." *Historiae* 1.9, p. 16.

became prosperous and immigrants crowded in … new buildings arose and the fertility of the populace increased."[211] But this vision of a reformed and revitalized Florence quickly collapses into one of unfulfilled potential:

> Only the nearness of Rome in her grandeur prevented Florence's growth and rise to power. … Other cities that had once been great were oppressed by their neighbor Rome, ceased to grow, and even became smaller. How then might Florence's power grow? Being under imperial rule [*sub imperio*] she could not augment her borders by war, nor indeed wage war at all; nor could she boast splendid magistrates, since their jurisdiction was narrowly circumscribed and beholden to Roman magistrates. … Rome drew to herself everything wonderful that was engendered in Italy and drained all other cities. … Before the Romans took over [*rerum potirentur*], many cities and peoples flourished magnificently in Italy, and under the Roman empire all of them declined. After the Roman domination [*dominatio Romana*] ended, on the other hand, the other cities immediately began to raise their heads and flourish. What her growth had taken away, her decline restored. [212]

It is important to underline the novelty of Bruni's historiographical argument here. As Pocock notes, Bruni "embarks on an altogether new narrative, for which nothing has prepared us."[213] By placing under examination the concept of civic growth, Bruni appears to be making a Sallustian

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[211] "Civitas … robustius coalescere, et immigrabant frequentes … Surgebant aedifcia; suboles augebatur." *Historiae* 1.9, p. 16.

[212] "Crescere tamen civitatis potentiam ac maiorem in modum atolli, Romane magnitudinis vicinitas prohibebat. … Romae urbis moles sua magnitudine vicinitatem patiebatur. Quin immo et quae ante fuerant magnae, ob eius urbis gravem nimium propinquitatem, exhaustae porro diminutaque sunt. Quemadmodum enim tunc cresceret civitatis potentia? Neque sane fines augere bello poterat sub imperio constituta nec omnino bella exercere nec magistratus satis magnfici, quippe eorum iurisdictio intra breves limites claudebatur, et haec ipsa Romanis magistratibus erat obnoxia. … quidquid egregium per Italiam nascebatur ad se trahens, alias civitates exhauriebat. … Etenim priusquam Romani rerum potirentur, multas per Italiam civitates gentesque magnifice flourisse, easdem omnes stante Romano imperio exinanitas constat. Rursus vero posteris temporibus, ut dominatio Romana cessavit, confestim reliquae civitates efferre capita et florere coeperunt, adeo quod incrementum abstulerat, diminutio reddidit." *Historiae* 1.10–11, pp. 16–17.

[213] Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 163.

move, and he had just cited the *Bellum Catilinae* when discussing Florence's origins.[214] But while all of Bruni's readers would have been familiar with the connection that Sallust drew between Roman liberty and growth, they almost certainly would not have been expecting to discover that Rome had apparently robbed other Italian peoples and states of their own chance to expand.

Even though Salutati in his Ancona letter had already shown that such an interpretation of Italy's Roman past was possible, it was indeed remarkable that Bruni chose to enshrine this version of events in Florence's official history. Pocock captures the essence of Bruni's revisionism: "Bruni has established an Italian history distinct from that of Rome: a context in which Roman virtue and glory, liberty and empire, can be viewed critically, as by no means as beneficial to others as they were—for a limited period—to the Romans themselves."[215] The key issue for us is whether Bruni goes as far as arguing that the Romans not only suppressed growth in Italy, but also liberty. Although Bruni does not state unequivocally here that Rome enslaved its Italian neighbours, he makes it difficult to see them as being anything other than unfree. Florence is a case in point: it could not expand its borders, nor wage war independently, and its magistrates were "beholden" (*obnoxia*) to those of Rome. Once again, Bruni fails to mention that the Florentines, along with the other peoples of Italy, were soon absorbed into Rome's body politic following their admission into the Roman citizenship. Instead, Bruni wants to maintain that Florence and the other Italian communities retained their identity as *civitates*, albeit ones subject to Rome. Bruni, then, does not conceptualize Roman imperialism in Italy as a historical

[214] *Historiae* 1.4, p. 10.

[215] Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 165.

process involving the dissolution and incorporation of other states; Rome's subject *civitates* could not grow, but they were able to persist as political entities awaiting a future opportunity to do so. We shall see in Chapter Four that, like Bruni, Machiavelli will describe the Roman Republic as stifling its neighbours' growth and draining their resources.[216] However, Machiavelli will leave no doubt that the Republic not only prevented other states from growing, but it also suppressed their liberty.

Shifting focus away from Rome and onto Rome's Italian subjects was a necessary step for Bruni to take, since the specific story that he wants to tell in Book One is not that of Rome—or in fact of Italy—but of Tuscany. Bruni begins his Tuscan history with the Etruscans, whom he explains exerted a powerful, even dominating, influence over pre-Roman northern Italy: "eventually the Etruscans dominated lands far beyond their own borders."[217] Bruni clearly wants to establish for Tuscany its own proud phase of ancient history, while being aware that this history would of course ultimately be terminated by Rome. How, then, does Bruni approach Rome's dealings with the Etruscans? He uses the verb *subigere* a number of times when describing Rome's Etruscan policy, noting, for instance, that by the fall of the Roman Empire Etruria had been "subjugated" (*subacta*) for some seven hundred years.[218] While Bruni does not spell out that the Etruscans were rendered unfree by Roman imperialism, his choice to employ the language of subjugation might well be seen to imply as much.

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[216] It is possible that in *Discorsi* 2.2 Machiavelli is consciously developing Bruni's portrait of Rome as presented here in *Historiae* 1.10–11.

[217] "Verum etiam extra longe lateque dominaretur." *Historiae* 1.13, p. 20. On Bruni's Etruscanology, see Giovanni Cipriani, *Il mito etrusco nel rinascimento* (Florence: Olschki, 1980).

[218] *Historiae* 1.36, p. 48. See also 1.31, p. 40 and 1.35, p. 46.

However, Bruni presents one significant obstacle in the path of this conclusion when he notes that "although they [i.e. the Romans] had subjugated the Etruscans by arms, still, after the latter had surrendered themselves and their possessions into the power of the Roman people, the victors gave them the honorable name of allies."[219] Bruni had just mentioned that Etruria finally "came into the power of the Roman people" (*in potestatem populi Romani*) about four hundred and seventy years after the founding of Rome, indicating that he is thinking of Rome's victory against the Etruscans and Gauls at the Battle of Lake Vadimonis in 283 BCE. This episode falls outside the extant books of Livy, and it is therefore not entirely clear what classical material underlies Bruni's conclusion that Rome gave the Etruscans the name of *socii*. One likely candidate is a passage in which Livy describes the aftermath of Camillus's victory over the Etruscans in 388 BCE.[220] Livy records that at this time the Veientes, Capenates, and Faliscans were "received into the state" (*in civitatem accepti*) as "new citizens" (*novi cives*).[221] Even if Bruni does not have this specific passage in mind here, there is no question that he would have been familiar with it from his demonstrably close reading of Livy. It is therefore significant that he chooses again to pass over in silence the fact that Rome sought to incorporate the Etruscans, as well as other Italian peoples, with grants of citizenship. Indeed, he does not pause to explain what it actually meant for the Etruscans to receive the label *socii*. If anything, Bruni frames his description in such a way as to cast doubt on the Etruscans' free status. In referring to the Etruscans as surrendering into the Roman people's power, Bruni articulates the distinctive

[219] "Romani quamvis armis subactos Etruscos, tamen, postquam se suaque in potestatem populi Romani dedidere, honesto vocabulo socios appellarunt." *Historiae* 1.35, p. 46.

[220] As noted by Hankins: *Historiae*, p. 488, n. 34.

[221] Livy 6.4.4.

Roman language of *deditio* (surrender). As Lavan comments, for the Romans *deditio* "always involved the foreign people renouncing its sovereignty and placing itself entirely in Roman power until the Roman commander decided its future status."[222] But Bruni does not confirm that the Etruscans acquired any formal rights after their surrender, noting merely that the Romans chose to "call" them *socii*. We may well wonder, then, what the *res* were behind the *verba*. The fact that, as Bruni subsequently informs us, the Etruscans would rebel from Rome twice more after 283 BCE—the second time as leading belligerents in the Social War—raises further doubts about the benevolence of Rome's treatment of its so-called allies.[223]

While Bruni may not want to state categorically that the Roman people enslaved its Italian neighbours, he is certainly prepared to use the language of servitude when describing life under the Roman emperors. He locates the ultimate origins of the Roman empire's decline in "the moment that Rome gave up her liberty to slave under [*servire*] the emperors."[224] Bruni now takes up a broadly Sallustian position on the connectedness of liberty, virtue, and empire: "the Roman Empire began to collapse once the disastrous name of Caesar had begun to brood over the city. For liberty gave way before the imperial name, and when liberty departed, so did virtue."[225] Moreover, although Bruni is clearly preoccupied with the deleterious effects that the

[222] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 188. His discussion of *deditio* occupies 186–90.

[223] *Historiae* 1.36, p. 48.

[224] "Declinationem autem Romani imperii ab eo fere tempore ponendam reor quo, amissa libertate, imperatoribus servire Roma incepit." *Historiae* 1.38, p. 48. Bruni seems to associate 'barbarian' rule with a particularly extreme form of servitude: for instance, he says that Totila, the Ostrogothic king, brought Italy to a "harder servitude" (*duriore servitute*) than it had been previously experiencing. *Historiae* 1.63, p. 80.

[225] "Romanum imperium ruere coepisse, cum primo Caesareum nomen, tamquam clades aliqua, civitati incubuit. Cessit enim libertas imperatorio nomini, et post libertatem virtus abivit." *Historiae* 1.38, p. 50.

Roman Republic's growth had on Italy, he cannot help but admire—again in a Sallustian mode––the stunning imperial achievements of the free *populus Romanus*: "The Roman Empire was founded and perfected by the Roman people. The early kings never attained such wide domains as to merit the name of empire. The reality and the name of empire emerged under the consuls and dictators and military tribunes, the magistrates of a free people."[226] Bruni goes on to name the parts of the non-European world that the Romans "subjugated with [their] arms" (*armis subacta*), before naming the areas of Europe "conquered in war" (*bello domitis*), yet Italy does not feature in this list.[227] Bruni underscores that these feats were accomplished by "the free people of a single city" (*unius urbis libero populo*), but the Italians' place in the Roman Republic's imperial project is again left unspecified.

What is clear is that Bruni thinks Italy remained an unfree space until the medieval emperors' dominating influence began to recede from the peninsula. He conceptualizes this as a slow process: "little by little, the Italian cities [*civitates*] began to pay heed to liberty and to acknowledge the empire nominally rather than in practice. … At last those Italian cities [*urbes*] that had survived the various floods of barbarians began to grow and flourish and gradually regained their ancient prestige."[228] Liberty, then, did not come to the *civitates* of *Italia* overnight, but only after they had extricated themselves from slavery under the Holy Roman Emperors.

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[226] "Romanum imperium a populo Romano institutum atque perfectum est. Nam reges quidem non ita late possederunt ut imperium meruerit appellari. Sub consulibus ac dictatoribus tribunisque militaribus, qui fuerunt libero populo magistratus, et res et nomen emsersit imperii." *Historiae* 1.69, p. 86.

[227] *Historiae* 1.69, p. 86.

[228] "Civitates Italiae paulatim ad libertatem respicere ac imperium verbo magis quam facto confiteri coeperunt … Denique quotcumque ex variis barbarorum diluviis superfuerant urbes per Italiam, crescere atque florere et in pristinam auctoritatem sese in dies attollere." *Historiae* 1.74–75, p. 92.

That this historical transformation took some time is understandable, since the medieval emperors were presiding over an *imperium* in Italy which had been a monarchical construct since the time of Augustus.[229] In Bruni's account, the process of civic liberation in Italy was complicated by the rise of factional conflict. He is of course referring to the struggles between the Guelfs and Ghibellines, or, in his words, between a side that favoured "the liberty of peoples," and one that "had forgotten the liberty and glory of their ancestors … [and] preferred to obey foreigners rather than be ruled by their own people."[230] We shall see that the manipulation of factional strife emerges in the *Historiae* as one of the crucial levers of Florentine foreign policy.

II. BRUNI ON THE FLORENTINE IMPERIAL REPUBLIC

I now turn to examine how Bruni presents Florence's relations with its Tuscan neighbours. We have seen that in Book One of the *Historiae* Bruni jettisoned the vision of Florentine exceptionalism which he had offered in the *Laudatio*, underlining instead the shared historical experience of the Tuscan *civitates*. In doing so, Bruni had to reconstruct Florence's relationship to the Roman Republic; what mattered now was not that Florence had been founded by the free *populus Romanus*, but that, like all the cities of Tuscany, it had been denied the opportunity to grow, first by the Roman people itself, then by the Caesars, and finally by the medieval

[229] *Historiae* 1.70, p. 88.

[230] "Libertatem populorum magis complectebantur … libertatis et gloriae maiorum immemores, obsequi externis quam suos dominari malebant." *Historiae* 1.81, pp. 100–02.

emperors. At the opening of Book Two, however, Florence and the other major Tuscan cities were now republics and thus—so the Sallustian logic would seem to dictate—well placed to embark on their own imperial projects. We know that the story that Bruni will now be narrating is Florence's rise to the preeminent position in Tuscany; an achievement obviously bound up with its construction of the *dominium*. But if Bruni wants to show that among the Tuscan republics it was Florence that replicated most successfully the Roman dynamic between liberty and growth, he will surely not want to give the impression that, in enlarging its territory, Florence also reproduced the kind of oppressive effects which he associated with the Roman Republic's imperial expansion. This at least seems to be the case in the early books of the *Historiae*.

Bruni begins Book Two (completed by 1419) in the year 1250 with the death of the emperor Frederick II, an event which provides the catalyst for the Florentine people to "take the reins of government, defend liberty, and to direct the affairs of the state in accordance with the popular will."[231] From this point onwards, the Florentine people understood as a collective agent will be a leading protagonist in Italian geopolitics. Bruni explains why this is the case:

> It is wonderful to relate how great the strength of the people grew from these beginnings. The people was now itself a lord and a font [*auctor*] of honour, and men who only a short while before had been (frankly) servile towards princes and their supporters now, having tasted the sweetness of liberty, bent all their strength on raising themselves up and acquiring an honourable standing in their community. Thus the people grew strong in prudence and industry at home, in courage and arms abroad.[232]

[231] "Capessere gubernacula rerum ac tueri libertatem perrexit civitatemque totam omnemque eius statum populari arbitrio continere." *Historiae* 2.2, p. 108.

[232] "Ab his initiis profectum, mirabile dictum est quantum adoleverit populi robus. Homines enim, qui dudum aut principibus aut eorum fautoribus, ut vere dixerim, inservierant, gustata libertatis dulcedine, cum populus

Here Bruni again seems to channel the Sallustian claim that republican liberty provides the conditions for healthy competition among citizens which results in good government and military success.[233] He has, however, reformatted somewhat the classical argument, replacing Sallust's competition over glory (*gloria*) with one over honour (*dignitas*), and avoiding, at least for now, the Roman author's explicit connection between the state's liberty and its imperial expansion. Nevertheless, Bruni has indicated that Florence will from hereon play a large role as a military power in Italy's affairs, and his readers will therefore be waiting to discover what kind of foreign actor the Florentine people will prove itself to be.

Bruni immediately turns to the Florentines' first foreign venture as a free people, which happened to be against the Pistoians. He is careful to note that the Florentine people's motivation to launch a campaign against Pistoia was "neither ambition nor a desire for domination but a prudent concern for preserving its own liberty."[234] Bruni in a sense reveals here the ideological challenge that he will continually have to see off in the *Historiae* while he narrates Florence's dealings with its Tuscan neighbours. The desire for domination (*cupiditas dominandi*) is characteristic of the tyrant; in Book Nine it will be listed among Giangaleazzo Visconti's tyrannical traits when Bruni discusses Milanese imperial expansion.[235] As we saw in the previous

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iam ipse dominus auctorque honoris esset, totis se viribus attollebant, quo dignitatem inter suos mereruntur. Igitur domi consilium et industria; foris autem arma fortitudoque valebant." *Historiae* 2.2, p. 110.

[233] Cf. Sall. *Cat*. 7 and 52.

[234] "Nec ea quidem ambitione vel dominandi cupiditate, sed provida cura libertatis retinendae." *Historiae* 2.3, p. 110.

[235] *Historiae* 9.80, p. 84.

chapter, Antonio Loschi had helped circulate the claim that Florence's foreign policy represented for its subjects in the *dominium* "the cruelest tyranny."[236] Bruni therefore could hardly allow the Florentine people to be perceived as driven by *cupiditas dominandi* when interacting with other peoples and state, even in the relatively remote past. Instead, Bruni lays down a Florentine foreign policy doctrine centred on the concept of liberty.

The initial Pistoian foray serves as a template. The emperor Frederick II's son, Conrad, had been crowned King of Italy in 1237 and was now rumoured, Bruni records, to be preparing to invade the peninsula. Pistoia at that time was controlled by its Ghibelline faction, and hence the city could potentially provide support in Tuscany for Conrad. Bruni explains therefore that the Florentine people, "believing it would be dangerous for a neighbouring city to remain factionalized," marched on Pistoia in an attempt to reinstall the city's pro-Guelf faction which had previously been forced into exile by the Ghibellines.[237] In this way the Florentines hoped, Bruni observes, "to defend popular government and liberty in that city as well."[238] Bruni thus portrays Florence, from its very beginnings as a free state, as intervening in the foreign arena in order to further the cause of liberty at a regional, even 'national,' level by opposing those who would see Tuscany and Italy slave again under the rule of princes.

In Books Two to Four of the *Historiae* (written between c. 1416 and c. 1424), Bruni continues to present Florentine foreign policy in Tuscany as guided by what we might call a doctrine of 'liberal interventionism;' Florence is repeatedly said to involve itself in the internal

[236] Loschi, "Invectiva," 144.

[237] "Civitatem tam propinquam durare in partibus sibi periculosum arbitratus." *Historiae* 2.3, p. 110.

[238] "Populumque ac libertatem in ea quoque urbe asserere." *Historiae* 2.3, p. 110

politics of other states on the grounds that doing so helps secure these states' freedom and prevents their populations—or at least a particular faction within each population—from suffering harmful acts of injustice. It is telling that Bruni is particularly concerned to describe Florence's behaviour in these terms when he is writing about the republic's interference in the affairs of Pistoia, Volterra, and Arezzo; the three *civitates* which Florence would eventually absorb into its *dominium* during the second half of the fourteenth century. In the books of the *Historiae* dealing with the Duecento, Bruni thus prepares the ideological ground for the construction of the territorial state that is to come later. Soon after the Pistoia episode, Bruni discusses the first instance of Florentine intervention in Volterra, another city, he notes, which was held by the Ghibellines. In 1254 the Florentines stormed and captured the city, but granted the inhabitants "forgiveness" (*venia*). Bruni explains that "from the beginning it had been Florence's intention to correct [*reductos*] rather than destroy the Volterrans."[239] The Florentines therefore limited themselves to expelling some of the city's leading Ghibellines and establishing a "republican constitution" (*forma rei publicae*). Nonetheless, Florence's forced republicanization of a neighbouring *civitas* set an important precedent; the Florentine people would affect regime change in Tuscany in order to promote liberty, as well as its own strategic interests.

Bruni describes a subtler form of interference occurring the following year in Arezzo. After some factional conflict in the city, Florence intervened as a peace maker, demanding that the Aretines accept a Florentine *podestà* on the grounds that the magistrate would "preserve civic concord" (*concordia civium servaretur*) and protect "under [his] guardianship" (*sub tutela*) the

[239] "Mens civitatis ab initio fuerat, ut reductos mallet quam perditos Volterranos." *Historiae* 2.13, pp. 120–22.

recently marginalized Ghibelline faction.[240] Bruni thus suggests that, in this particular case, Florence was able to place itself above the party politics of a less powerful neighbour and exercise, through planting its representative in the city, the benevolent authority of a guardian. As we can see, Bruni enlists here the concept of *tutela* which had appeared in the section of the *Laudatio* concerned with Florence's foreign affairs. Moreover, he is willing to redeploy in the *Historiae* some of the other Roman concepts which had featured in the earlier work. For instance, Bruni records that in 1287 two groups of Guelfs that had been ejected from Arezzo in the wake of yet more internecine strife appealed to Florence as suppliants "seeking refuge in Florentine protection and loyalty" (*in eius fidem patrociniumque confugit*).[241] Moreover, Bruni notes that in 1309 the Florentine people "took up the cause" (*patrocinio suscepto*) of some exiles from Prato, restoring them to their city.[242] Bruni uses here the exact phrase—"*patrocinio suscepto*"—which he had employed in the *Laudatio* when explaining the policies whereby Florence had "gained growth and glory."[243]

There is further evidence to suggest that at this point in the *Historiae* Bruni is anxious to show that Florence had its Tuscan neigbours' best interests at heart. After describing the disturbances of 1309 in Prato, Bruni moves on to discuss Pistoia, which at that time was also experiencing political turmoil. The Florentines and the Lucchesi had captured Pistoia in 1306 after it had reverted to the Ghibelline cause. Since then, Florence and Lucca had "commanded"

[240] *Historiae* 2.17, p. 124.

[241] *Historiae* 3.77, p. 316.

[242] *Historiae* 4.110, p. 454.

[243] Bruni, *Laudatio*, 19.

(*imperitarunt*) the city jointly,[244] but by 1309, Bruni explains, the Pistoians had grown hostile to the "domination" (*dominatu*) of the Lucchesi and were preparing to revolt.[245] The Lucchesi proposed to their Florentine partners that Pistoia should be destroyed, but "the gentleness of the Florentine people prevailed," and Florence in fact encouraged the Pistoians in their rebellion.[246] As a result of the Florentines' "mercy" (*misertus*), the Pistoians were able to defend themselves successfully against the Lucchesi and thus Pistoia "became independent once more" (*in suam rediit potestatem*). Bruni gives his own judgement on the episode: "I should not find it easy to say whether the Florentine people behaved more magnanimously when it took hold of the city or when it let go of it."[247] While Bruni acknowledges, then, that Florence, in partnership with Lucca, exercised the power of command over Pistoia, it was the Lucchesi who exerted a dominating and potentially destructive influence over the city. The Florentine people, on the other hand, is presented as a moral agent that not only shows mercy to subject peoples, but even supports their struggles for independence.

As well as tutelary and patronal language, Bruni also at times articulates a language of loyalty (*fides*) while describing Florentine foreign policy in the early books of the *Historiae*. For example, when reporting on a debate that took place in 1260 about whether Florence should send aid to the town of Montalcino, "a friend and ally" (*amicum foedearatumque*),[248] Bruni has one of

[244] *Historiae* 4.97, p. 442.

[245] *Historiae* 4.110, p. 456.

[246] "Prevaluit mansuetudo apud Florentinum populum." *Historiae* 4.110, p. 456.

[247] "Nec facile dixerim maiori animo Florentinus populus eam urbem ceperit an dimiserit." *Historiae* 4.110, p. 456.

[248] *Historiae* 2.35, p. 146.

the speakers against the campaign insist that "we should have nothing to say if the safety of our allies could not be maintained without this venture. Our own risks would take second place to honour and loyalty [*fides*], and we would charge faithfully into battle to save our allies."[249] Bruni explains that Florence's allies would indeed have been best served if the campaign to relieve Montalcino had been delayed. Instead, the Florentine Guelfs marched out prematurely and suffered a crushing defeat at the river Arbia. Bruni's point is that in this case the Florentine people miscalculated how best to protect itself and its allies; he is not saying, however, that Florence lost sight of its foreign policy goal of advancing the cause of liberty.

In the early books of the *Historiae*, then, Bruni is happy to revive the model of ethical foreign relations—fashioned from the concepts of *patrocinium*, *tutela*, and *fides*—which he had developed in the *Laudatio.* But he is now willing, outside of the panegyric genre's confines, to observe that his more flawed Florentine people sometimes made mistakes when attempting to live up to this standard. It is also worth noting that, unlike in the *Laudatio*, Bruni recognizes in the *Historiae* that Florence does not have a monopoly on this version of foreign policy. He notes, for instance, that when Florence was struck with its own bout of intestinal disorder in 1303 that some citizens from Lucca intervened in the city and "set in order the condition of the commonwealth" (*rei publicae constituerunt statum*). Bruni comments that the Lucchesi had performed "a work worthy of an ally" (*bonum ac sociale operati opus*).[250] Nevertheless, it is the

[249] "Nam si absque profectione illuc vestra sociorum salus tuta esse non potest, nihil novi afferimus. Cedant enim dignitati et fidei pericula nostra et pro sociorum salute devote in proelium ruamus." *Historiae* 2.41, p. 152.

[250] *Historiae* 4.78, p. 418.

Florentine people that Bruni presents as the principal guarantor of Tuscany's political stability and freedom.

While Bruni indicates that by acting as a patron of other liberty-supporting elements in Tuscany the Florentine people made good use of the patronal model of foreign relations, he is also concerned to point out that patron-client relationships were sometimes exploited by private parties to damaging effect. The Aretine Geulfs that we saw the Florentine people receiving into its *patrocinium* in 1287 had in fact been ousted from their city by a pro-Ghibelline bishop who, Bruni notes, had "acquired all his power from clients and nearby tyrants of the Ghibelline faction."[251] But the most worrying instances of the private manipulation of patron-client relations for Bruni are those which occurred within the Florentine state itself. A particularly striking example of this anxiety is found in Bruni's account of the popular-magnate conflict that preceded the passing of the Ordinances of Justice in 1293. Bruni, in his most popular republican mode, comments:

> The nobility … had never acted as an equal partner with respect to the people. Superior in wealth and arrogant in manner, its haughtiness was unsuited to a free city, and it could be restrained from committing unjust acts only with the greatest difficulty. Supported by their vast cliéntèles and assisted by their numerous family connections, they reduced the weak to a state resembling honourable servitude.[252]

[251] "Potentiam omnem ex clientelis ac finitimis tyrannis diversarum partium coegisse se." *Historiae* 3.77, p. 316.

[252] "Nobilitas … non satis aequam societatem cum populo exercebat; praepotens siquidem opibus et animis, plus quam liberae civitati conveniret elata, haud facile temperabat ab iniuriis inferendis. Homines longis stipati clientelis et multis, ut par erat, propinquitatibus subnixi, imbecillos honesta veluti servitude premebant." *Historiae* 4.26, p. 358.

Bruni, then, sees the formation of client networks as one of the nobility's most potent weapons in its attempt to bring the Florentine people, or at least the commons, to "complete servitude" (*plenam servitituem*).[253] Those whose liberty was threatened by the nobility found their champion in the figure of Giano della Bella, who sponsored the anti-magnate Ordinances. Interestingly, Bruni notes that the "multitude" (*multitudo*) came to regard Giano as the "patron of liberty" (*patronum libertatis*).[254] But it seems that Giano's new title was a source of deep resentment in the state; Giano was perceived by the nobles, and even some of the commons, to have grown overly powerful and was forced into exile. Bruni expresses his admiration for Giano, commenting that a man who had done so much for the Florentine people did not deserve to die in exile.[255] While Bruni seems, then, to think that Giano really was a patron of Florentine liberty, it is significant that he attests that many Florentines felt that what looked like the concentration of patronal power in the hands of a private individual posed a danger to the republic, or at least to their own standing.

This is not the only time that Bruni explains that the fear of an overmighty patronal figure precipitated civil unrest in Florence. In 1308, Bruni notes, the knight Corso Donati was suspected of "aspiring to tyranny" (*tyrannidis affectatorem*).[256] One of the "arts" (*artes*) whereby Corso was able to increase his power was to establish himself as "the patron of the unfortunate

[253] *Historiae* 4.26, p. 360.

[254] *Historiae* 4.40, p. 380.

[255] *Historiae* 4.44, p. 386.

[256] *Historiae* 4.106, p. 452.

and defender of the injured."[257] Although Bruni makes it clear that Corso never was in fact a tyrant-in-waiting, we can again see a perceived connection in Florentine political life between patronal authority and tyranny. And Bruni indicates that this connection was persistent. In Book Eleven he discusses a crisis of 1395 which centred on another Florentine knight, Donato Acciaiuoli. Bruni explains that Donato came to hold "excessive and unconstrained power" (*nimia potentia nec ea ipsa coercita*) in Florentine politics: "ambassadors sent to the city frequented his house, and all who had some business with the city took refuge with him as with a patron."[258] Bruni goes on to register the sharp censure that Donato's behaviour attracted, recording that his enemies referred to him as a "duke and lord" (*ducem et dominum*). The stories of men like Giano della Bella, Corso Donati, and Donato Acciaiuoli show that, on Bruni's account, the forging of patron-client relations by private individuals was frequently associated with plans to subvert the Florentine state; a view of the city's internal affairs that applied to the politics of the late Duecento as much as it did to those of the late Trecento. And yet Bruni does not suggest at any of those moments in the early books of the *Historiae* when he describes the Florentine people intervening in other states like a patron that Florence could be seen as bringing to bear a destabilizing influence on other polities; in fact, he wants to make the opposite point.

There are, however, signs that Bruni came to modify his presentation of Florentine imperialism as a largely benevolent force. In the opening books of the *Historiae* he shows a concern to emphasize the defensive aims of Florence's foreign policy, as the city sought to

[257] "Patronum calamitosorum prohibitoremque iniuriarum." *Historiae* 4.105, p. 450.

[258] "Legati ad civitatem missi domum illius frequentabant, et omnes quibus aliquid negotii cum civitate erat ad hunc tanquam ad patronum confugiebant." *Historiae* 11.37, p. 202.

counter the apparent Ghibelline threat to Italian liberty. But in the later books we can detect a change of tone. For instance, Bruni seems to become less worried about glorifying Florence's imperial expansion. One prominent example is the speech at the opening of Book Six that he gives to the Florentine knight Pino della Tosa. At issue here in 1329 was whether Florence should purchase Lucca from German forces that were occupying the city. Pino argues in favour of doing so on the following grounds:

> Just think, too, how much your power will increase when this most beautiful and well-fortified city-state, with such a large territory and so many towns and citadels comes into your power! Think how much the glory, fame and majesty of the Florentine People will grow if a city which has long been nearly our equal in wealth and power should be made subject [*subiiciatur*] to you! For my part, I confess, as one who practices the common life and moral customs of mankind, I am moved by the things that men hold to be goods: extending borders, enlarging empire, raising on high the glory and splendor of the state, assuring our own security and advantage.[259]

Although Pino points out that Florence's security would be improved by subjecting a potentially hostile neighbouring state, he is clearly not content to put forward a purely defensive vision of foreign relations. It is significant that Bruni has Pino appeal to a widely held consensus that territorial expansion and the growth of imperial power are in themselves considered to be "goods" (*bona*); indeed, by mentioning "the moral customs of mankind" (*moribus hominum*), we might take him to be suggesting that empire has a normative underpinning.

[259] "Age vero, ipsa per se quanta potentiae erit accessio pulcherrimam munitissimamque urbem, tantum agri, tot oppida, tot arces, in potestatem vestram devenire? Quid autem, Gloria et amplitudo nominis maiestasque Florentini populi quantum augescet, si civitatas, dudum nostrae opibus et potentia paene par, nobis subiiciatur? Equidem, ut ista communi vita moribusque hominum utor, ita illis me moveri fateor quae bona apud homines putantur: extendere fines, imperium augere, civitatis gloriam splendoremque extollere, securitatem utilitatemque asciscere." *Historiae* 6.5, p. 158.

Pino reaffirms this position in a particularly interesting way when responding to a possible argument against purchasing Lucca:

> There are those who tell you that you have enough to take care of [*tuendum*] already, and that you should not burden yourselves with new expenses and enterprises. … They think only of guarding [*tuendum*] what we have, as though the taking of Lucca would not be done to safeguard [*pro tutela*] what we possess … These men adopt an attitude towards conducting public affairs different from the one they hold in the case of their own patrimonies. They are always seeking to extend their patrimony and labor to do so day and night; but they forbid the republic from expanding [*acquirere*]. The Roman people, our parent, would never have achieved world empire if it had rested content with what it had and had fled from new enterprises and expense. In any case, man does not have the same goal in public and private affairs. In public affairs the goal is magnificence, consisting in glory and greatness; in private affairs the goal is modesty and frugality.[260]

Here Pino takes aim at those citizens whose conservative impulses in public matters would dictate Florence's foreign policy.[261] Though he readily admits that Florence must secure what it already possesses, he maintains that the best way to achieve this is in fact to pursue further acquisitions. In this way the subjection of Lucca would serve a tutelary purpose. The concept of *tutela*, then, features once more in a Florentine view of empire. Yet Pino's argument is not that an expanding Florence will bring subjected peoples under its guardianship and thereby uphold their status and property; rather, by subjecting others, Florence may better guard itself and its

[260] "Nam sunt qui vos habere monentes, id quod est tuendum censeant, et nec impensis nec coeptis sese novis onerandum. … Tuendum quod est solum consent, quasi vero ista susceptio non pro tutela, fiat eorum quae possidemus … Non eadem isti mente in patrimonio proprio ac in republica versantur. Patrimonium quidem semper augere quaerunt atque in eo die noctuque anhelant; reipublicae ver acquirere interdicunt. Populus Romanus, parens noster, nunquam orbis imperium nactus esset, si suis rebus contentus nova coepta impensasque refugisset. Nec sane idem propositum est homini publice et privatim. Nam publice quidem magnificentia proposita est, quae in gloria amplitudineque consistit; privatim vero modestia et frugalitas." *Historiae* 6.6, p. 160–62.

[261] Ianziti suggests that Bruni is targeting through Pino the supposedly self-serving merchant class of the early Florentine commune: Ianziti, *Writing History*, 127.

own possessions. Pino, however, does not let his case rest here. He again wants to point out that imperial expansion is inherently worthwhile. It is at best hypocritical for those who are bent on increasing their own possessions to be against their republic acquiring things. These citizens, Pino suggests, have in fact made a serious error of moral judgement: they should be worried about curbing their own acquisitive desire, not that of the state.

For Bruni's Pino, then, one must distinguish between what is appropriate in private and in public life when thinking about acquisition, though it is not clear exactly why individuals should have restrained appetites and states expansive ones. We shall see, however, that Machiavelli will place under the closest scrutiny in his theory of empire the relationship between the acquisitive desires of humans and the imperial expansion of states. In Pino's speech we should not expect to find such theoretical reflection. Instead, Bruni has his speaker rely on a familiar argument in favour of Florence pursuing its territorial aggrandizement. Pino asserts that the *populus Romanus* is the Florentines' parent and thus, it would seem to follow, Florence would do well to imitate the restless expansionism that won Rome global empire. As we saw, Bruni avoided emphasizing in Book One of the *Historiae* the genealogical connection between Rome and Florence which he had made in the *Laudatio*. Why, then, does it reappear here? As Hankins notes, Pino's speech must largely represent Bruni's own views on the Lucchese question;[262] Bruni comments that the Florentines' choice not to purchase the city was an extremely poor one.[263] It is possible that Bruni allows himself to express such a judgement since Florence never would capture Lucca, and therefore the ideological need to present a more altruistic vision of Florentine imperialism—

[262] Hankins, "A Mirror," 3–4.

[263] *Historiae* 6.8, p. 162.

one which might satisfy the subjected peoples themselves—did not arise. Yet neither Bruni nor his speaker goes as far as saying that the Florentines had designs on enslaving the Lucchesi. Bruni has Pino describe in a number of different ways what it would mean for Florence to acquire Lucca. Pino speaks in terms of the city being received (*suscipiendum*) by Florence,[264] coming into or being placed under the Florentines' power (*in potestatem vestram devenire* / *potestati nostrae subdere*),[265] and simply being made subject (*subiiciatur*).[266] Bruni's choice of language certainly does not help reassure his readers that if Florence had purchased Lucca, then the Lucchesi would have retained their liberty. But here Bruni will not countenance describing Florence's imperial project as aiming at the enslavement of subject peoples.

The closest Bruni comes to admitting that Florence imposed servitude on a subjected people is in his discussion of the surrender of Pistoia in 1332. Three years earlier, Florence had made peace with the pro-Ghibelline faction that was then controlling the city, and one condition of the settlement was the return of exiles of Guelf and Florentine sympathies.[267] Bruni explains that by 1332 the repatriated exiles had become fearful of the intentions of the still dominant Ghibellines and therefore advocated "surrendering" (*dedendi*) the city to Florence. In this way, Bruni notes, "the Pistoians handed over the control and power of their city to the Florentine people."[268] Bruni, then, wants to show that Florence acquired Pistoia through a voluntary act of

[264] *Historiae* 6.3, p. 156.

[265] *Historiae* 6.5, p. 158 and p. 160.

[266] *Historiae* 6.5, p. 158.

[267] *Historiae* 6.9, pp. 162–64.

[268] "Pistorienses arbitrium potestatemque civitatis Florentino populo tradidere." *Historiae* 6.29, p. 184.

deditio. Yet his narrative reveals that it is misleading to claim that the Pistoians collectively surrendered their city; rather, one partisan segment of the populace took the decision. As we saw, *deditio* is a concept whose classical resonances Bruni was well attuned to. In Book One Bruni presented the Etruscans as holding an ambiguous status following their *deditio* to Rome; the Romans called them *socii*, but the reality of their relationship to Rome remained unclear. In the case of the Pistoians, however, Bruni is more specific:

> After this [i.e. their *deditio*] the Pistoians were considered to be neither a federated nor a subject people, but rather a subjected one, although for appearance's sake they reserved in the act of surrender the right of choosing magistrates and other rights of this kind, the simulacra of a free people.[269]

This is an extraordinarily important passage for reconstructing Bruni's conception of the status (or statuses) of Florence's imperial subjects. He distinguishes here between three different states that those who enter into relations with Florence might occupy. The "federated" (*foederati*) are the most straightforward case. Simply speaking, they are those peoples who hold a treaty (*foedus*) with Florence. It must be assumed that Bruni thinks of the federated relationship as one that entails conditions which are binding on both parties. The first Florentine *foedus* that Bruni records was made between Florence and Siena in 1255 and included, he notes, "several reciprocal agreements" (*multa ultro citroque conventa*).[270] Within the context of the passage quoted above, *foederati* seem to stand for peoples who have a relationship to Florence that is

[269] "Neque posthac ut foederati neque rursus ut subditi, sed ut subiecti Pistorienses sunt habiti, etsi ad speciem ius deligendi magistratus ceterasque huiusmodi, liberi populi simulacra, eis in deditione reservata sunt." *Historiae* 6.29, p. 184.

[270] *Historiae* 2.18, p. 124.

governed by some sort of formal arrangement, but who retain their full independence. This is the 'freest' type of relationship that foreign peoples can enjoy with the Florentine state. It is the distinction Bruni makes between the "subject" (*subditi*) and the "subjected" (*subiecti*)—the latter represented here by the Pistoians—that is more puzzling. Unfortunately, Bruni does not specify what he means by *subditi*. Hankins suggests that, for Bruni, *subditi* are conquered peoples "who could be commanded as inferiors;" they are therefore placed here in extreme opposition to the fully autonomous *foederati*. Hankins thinks that the Pistoians, as *subiecti*, fall somewhere between these two states.[271] It is not possible, however, to be sure that Bruni does have in mind such a spectrum of statuses. What is clear is that he presents the Pistoians as very far from enjoying the independence of *foederati.* We saw that Bruni's Pino had said that the Lucchesi would be "made subject" (*subiiciatur*) if the Florentines purchased Lucca. It is significant therefore that the verb *subicere* reappears here with reference to the Pistoians. Yet Bruni is now prepared to admit that when a people is subjected, its liberty is, at the very least, considerably diminished. But we may take Bruni to be making a far more incendiary remark. For if the rights that the Pistoians now enjoy are only "the simulacra of a free people," then we might conclude that their liberty itself is also no more than specious. We should keep firmly in mind Bruni's revelations here about Pistoia when we come to Machiavelli's comments in *Discorsi* 2.21 on the city's subjection to Florence.

Bruni offers us another glimpse at the condition of Florence's subjects when he discusses what happened when the Florentines lost their own liberty to Walter of Brienne, the so-called Duke of Athens, who ruled the city from 1342–43. It could not be any plainer that Bruni views

[271] *Historiae*, p. 556, n. 20.

Walter as a tyrant who brought slavery on Florence. Indeed, Bruni notes that it is worth considering carefully this episode of Florentine history in order to learn the lesson that "citizens should fear nothing more than servitude."[272] Bruni provides a detailed account of how Walter went about establishing his "domination" (*dominatus*) over the city of Florence, but more relevant to our concerns is the strategy that the tyrant is said to have used to secure the allegiance of subject cities:

> He at once summoned assemblies in Arezzo and Pistoia, and received *imperium* from the peoples of those cities, not in the name of the Florentine people, but in his own name. It was an extremely astute idea he had to bind those cities to himself by an act of good will, for he reckoned he would be taken as conferring a benefit if he restored those cities, long subject [*subessent*] to the Florentines, to an equal status with the Florentines; they would voluntarily accept his personal rule, and he would not have to rule them through others.[273]

On Bruni's account, then, two of Florence's subject *civitates* were instrumental in helping consolidate the power of a tyrant in Tuscany. We should note that Bruni presents this process as having markedly republican underpinnings; it is the Aretine and Pistoian *populi* who voluntarily placed *imperium* in Walter's hands. They did so through popular assemblies, or *conciones*, which recall the classical Roman *contio*: "the 'informal,' that is, non-voting, form of popular assembly where public speeches were heard."[274] The question, of course, is why peoples who had

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[272] "Civibus nihil magis formidandum esse quam servitutem." *Historiae* 6.117, p. 268.

[273] "Statim per legatos Arretii et Pistorii concionibus advocatis, imperium a populis earum civitatum suscepit, non iam Florentini populi nomine, sed sui ipsius. Id astuto admodum consilio factum, quo sibi benevolentia aliqua devinciret civitates: existimavit enim velut beneficium se conferre, si quae dudum Florentinis redderet, nec [ipse] per alios sed per se ipse voluntariis dominaretur." *Historiae* 6.117, p. 268.

[274] Robert Morstein-Marx, *Mass Oratory and Political Power in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3.

supposedly been ruling themselves under republican constitutions would now want to allow a monarchical figure to dominate them? Bruni's answer, although it comes somewhat obliquely, is that Walter could be perceived to be granting a *beneficium* to the Aretines and Pistoians by breaking the asymmetric power relationship which they had previously had with the Florentines; presumably, all three peoples would now have an equal status as Walter's unfree subjects.[275] It is not entirely clear if Bruni means to say that the Aretines and Pistoians were aware that, in supporting Walter, they were placing themselves under a tyrannical regime. But he certainly indicates that they were willing to take quite drastic steps in an attempt to redress the balance of power in Tuscany. Indeed, Bruni makes it look as if the Aretines and Pistoians were in the ironic position of hoping that a tyrant might liberate them from their subjection under Florentine rule.

The key question yet again is whether Bruni is prepared to conceptualize such subjection as slavery. And once more there is reason to think that he may be. At the opening of Book Seven Bruni surveys the aftermath of the Duke of Athens' tyranny:

> The tyrant had been expelled, liberty restored, and the city had come under its own jurisdiction, but it remained bereft of many important protections and of [its] empire, enlarged over so long a period. For the Aretines, Pistoians, and Volterrans, thanks to the fall of the tyrant, had also themselves laid claim to their ancient liberty.[276]

[275] Ianziti notes that in Bruni's explanation of why Arezzo and Pistoia supported Walter we may detect "a hint of criticism voiced against the earlier communal system posited on Florentine domination of subject cities." Ianziti, *Writing History*, 144. However, Ianziti does not tackle the question of whether Bruni equates such domination with unfreedom.

[276] "Pulso tyranno libertateque recepta, civitas quidem sui iuris facta, ceterum multis ac magnis praesidiis auctoque dudum imperio spoliata remansit, Arretinis, Pistoriensibus, Volaterranis per eandem tyranni ruinam et ipsis quoque sese in libertatem pristinam vindicantibus." *Historiae* 7.2, p. 284.

After narrating over five books Florence's Tuscan policy since 1250, Bruni now states that the republic's efforts had resulted in the creation of an *imperium*. Here the term *imperium* must signify a physical space and one, we can assume, in which the power of command is exercised by one agent over others. Moreover, it seems that Bruni is acknowledging here that Florence had infringed on the liberty of the peoples inhabiting the three subject *civitates* within its empire. The only other way to make sense of Bruni's remarks is to take him to be saying that the Aretines, Pistoians, and Volterrans had all claimed their liberty from Walter, and Walter alone; they had enjoyed a free status prior to 1342, despite being subject to the Florentines. Yet Bruni describes these peoples as recovering an "ancient" (*pristina*) form of liberty, and thus this is not a promising interpretation. Bruni does, however, go on to suggest that the Florentines attempted to restore order in their empire by framing their subjects' actions as directed against the tyrant and not themselves. He explains how the Florentines took a new approach in dealing with Arezzo:

> They [i.e. the Florentines] issued a public decree, voluntarily renouncing all jurisdiction held by the Florentine people in the city of Arezzo. Envoys were sent out to congratulate the Aretines on the recovery of their liberty from the tyrant and to deliver the decree of the Florentine people renouncing jurisdiction there. When they had arrived in Arezzo they explained their mandate in a popular assembly and read out the public decree from the document. The Aretines rejoiced to hear it and, dropping their suspicions, embraced with renewed fervor their allegiance to the Florentine people and resolved to continue friendly relations with them.[277]

[277] "Decreto igitur publice facto, ius omne quod Florentinus populus in urbe Arretio habuisset, sponte remissum est, missique legati qui Arretinis gratularentur pro libertate de tyranno recepta et Florentini decretum populi de remissione iuris deferent. Ii, cum Arretium venissent, in contione populi mandata exposuerunt, decretumque publicum ex scripto recitarunt. Arretini vero haec audientes laetati sunt, et omissa suscipione, fidem Florentini populi maiorem in modum complexi, in amicitia persevarunt." *Historiae* 7.15, p. 296.

Here Bruni reveals that the Aretines had previously been subject to the *ius* of the Florentine people. He does not, however, say that this form of juridical subjection equated to an unfree condition, yet the Aretines were clearly delighted to see its cancellation. It is significant that the Florentines chose to break the news in a *contione* of the Aretine populace, the same sort of popular assembly which had granted *imperium* to Florence's former tyrant. There is a strategic lesson in this episode for the imperialist—and one which Machiavelli will expound in the *Discorsi*—:[278] the heavy-handed imposition of law on foreign subjects is rarely an effective way of securing their obedience. Bruni notes that the Florentines' new, light-touch approach had the effect of increasing Aretine loyalty (*fides*). Bruni's readers would know, however, that this was far from the end of the Aretine problem. Indeed, Arezzo's political upheavals would continue unabated until 1384, when Florence purchased the city from the French mercenary leader Enguerrand de Coucy.[279] As Bruni records in his *Memoirs*, he witnessed as a child the turbulent events leading up to the Florentine purchase.[280] In both this text and the *Historiae*, he presents Florence's intervention as finally bringing a welcome calm to the city's affairs; Arezzo was now definitively "in the power" (*in potestatem*) of the Florentine people.[281] However, Bruni remains

[278] *Discorsi* 2.21.

[279] For a recent treatment of the significance of these events, see Michael Martoccio, "Renaissance States of Mind," in *State Formations: Global Histories and Cultures of Statehood*, ed. John L. Brooke, Julia C. Strauss, and Greg Anderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 108–23.

[280] Leonardo Bruni, "De temporibus suis," in *Historiae*, vol. 3, 16–18, pp. 312–14.

[281] "Ita Arretium cum omnibus oppidis suis in Florentinorum potestatem, tamquam in portum aliquem deveniens, a longis iactionibus et acerbissimis tempestatibus requievit." *Historiae* 9.63, pp. 68–69; "Urbsque … et arx dedentibus civibus in Florentini populi devenerunt potestatem." Bruni, "De temporibus suis," 18, p. 314.

silent in both works about the status that the Aretines held now that their incorporation into the Florentine *imperium* had been completed.

Bruni deals in a rather cursory way with Florence's acquisitions of a number of other major Tuscan communities. He notes that in 1346 the San Miniatese elected to hand their town over to Florence after suffering "intestinal strife" (*intestinas seditiones*) and receiving "injuries" (*iniurias*) from the nobility. In this way, San Miniato "came into the power of the Florentine people" (*in potestatem Florentini populi pervenit*).[282] This phrase contains the stock language that Bruni uses when describing Florence's subjection of its Tuscan neighbours, a process which, as we have noted, accelerated from around the middle of the fourteenth century. For instance, he records that in 1349 "the peoples of Colle Val d'Elsa and San Gimignano, wracked by domestic turmoils, returned to the power of the Florentine people."[283] And even when treating the formal incorporation in 1361 of Volterra—one of only three *civitates* whose subjection to Florence is covered in the *Historiae*—Bruni merely remarks that "the Volterrans, buffeted by civil discord, came back into the power of the Florentine people."[284] It seems, then, that Bruni may have wanted to gloss over some of the key moments in the formation of the Florentine *dominium* / *imperium*.

He does, however, scrutinize much more closely Florence's final subjection of Prato and, in particular, the *civitas* Pistoia. Florence formalized its control over these two communities in 1350/51. Bruni notes that at this time Giovanni Visconti, the archbishop and lord of Milan, was

[282] *Historiae* 7.31, p. 310.

[283] "Collenses tantum et Geminianenses domesticis seditionibus laborantes in potestatem Florentini populi redierunt." *Historiae* 7.38, p. 314.

[284] "Volterrani, sedition civium conflictati, in potestatem Florentini populi redierunt." *Historiae* 8.40, p. 432.

making threatening moves in Tuscany, having "won over to his friendship and guardianship" (*in suam amicitiam tutelamque pellexit*) the region's Ghibelline sympathizers.[285] Consequently, the Florentines began to have concerns about the "loyalty" (*fides*) of the Pratesi and Pistoians.[286] They proposed to the former that "guardianship [*custodia*] of the city be handed over to the Florentine people, who would hold it for the sake of the peace and the common good."[287] Although the Pratesi were initially skeptical about Florence's intentions, certain Florentine individuals called on friends within the city who made the case for submission. In this way the Florentines managed to persuade the Pratesi to accept a garrison. Again, Bruni does not comment on whether this imposition had, in his view, any effects on the subject peoples' free status. The more interesting example is that of the Pistoians. Up to this point in the *Historiae*, Pistoia has featured as the key case study for assessing Bruni's conception of the Florentine Republic's imperial project in Tuscany. How, then, does he approach the city's final moments as an independent *civitas*?

Bruni records that, yet again, Pistoia had been suffering from factional conflict, resulting in one "party of citizens" (*partem civium*) having just been ejected from the city.[288] The Florentines, he notes, seized on this development and, "under the guise of offering help" (*per speciem officii*), suggested that, like the Pratesi, the Pistoians accept a Florentine garrison. Bruni shows that there was clearly little trust between the two parties, since the Pistoains employed "a

[285] *Historiae* 7.41, p. 318.

[286] *Historiae* 7.43, pp. 318–19.

[287] "Custodia eius oppida Florentino populo traderetur, pro communi utilitate quieteque eam habituro." *Historiae* 7.43, pp. 320.

[288] *Historiae* 7.45, p. 320.

similar disguise" (*non disimili figmento*) and agreed only to receive a small Florentine garrison, bound by an oath. Bruni goes on to describe how the situation took a turn for the worse when Florence's priors, without consulting the Florentine people, decided to enact a "dishonourable counsel" (*inhonestum consilium*).[289] They had the Pistoian exiles, along with some Florentine troops, storm the city at night and, once inside, attempt to join forces with the garrisoned soldiers. But due to a miscommunication, the garrison was not informed of the plan and thus actually helped to repel the invaders. The Pistoians were naturally unimpressed by what Bruni describes as "such great fraud and injury" (*tanta fraude iniuriaque*), and it was feared in Florence that they would now look to side with the Visconti "tyrant" (*tyrannus*).[290]

This is the setting for a speech that Bruni gives to an unnamed Florentine citizen. His advice, which Florence will end up following, is that the Florentines should demand that the Pistoians accept a meaningful garrison in their city or else be "mastered and crushed to their harm" (*malo domiti frangentur*).[291] Bruni gives his speaker a pragmatic rationale for holding this position, but one which pointedly does not ignore ethical considerations. The citizen begins by registering his disapproval of the priors' fraudulent attempt to capture Pistoia: "I should think that causing one's neighbours to suspect that one has designs on their liberty, and every dubious and unjust activity, is hostile to our way of thinking."[292] It is not the Florentine way, then, to make others think that the republic aims to deprive others of their liberty. However, this is not a

[289] *Historiae* 7.45, p. 322.

[290] *Historiae* 7.46, p. 324.

[291] *Historiae* 7.49, p. 328.

[292] "Suspicionem libertatis alterius occupandae finitimis inferre, et omnem incertum atque iniustum motum, nostris rationibus inimicum censerem." *Historiae* 7.47, p. 324.

particularly strong vision of the Florentine imperial project; we are not told, as we were in the *Laudatio*, that Florence's role on the foreign stage is to fight for liberty in Tuscany, and indeed beyond. Bruni's speaker continues:

> When we ourselves hold liberty so dear that we declare we would face all dangers, even death, to secure it, we should not imagine that this same sentiment is lacking in the rest of mankind. Some may lack the capacity for freedom, but we must believe that everyone shares the will to be free.[293]

Is the citizen implying that the Pistoians, apparently like all peoples, want to be free, yet they have proved themselves incapable of upholding their own liberty? If so, this claim could provide the basis for advocating that it is for their own good that the Pistoians come under Florentine protection. However, it is Florence's own interests, and not those of their neighbours, which are now underlined. Bruni's speaker argues that the Florentines must convince the Pistoians that it is not Florence's intention to extinguish their liberty, but also that some way must be found to "strip them of any power to harm us" (*potestatem omnem praeripere nocendi*).[294] The unappealing choice that the Pistoians face is between accepting a Florentine garrison and being mastered by force. And Bruni records that this was a decision that the Pistoians had to make under considerable duress. Before further negotiations seem to have begun, Florence resolved that "Pistoia should be forced to come into [Florentine] power" (*Pistorium in potestatem venire cogeretur*), and besieged the city. On their part, the Pistoians "tried to protect their rights and

[293] "Neque enim, cum ipsi tam caram habeamus libertatem nostram, cum pro illa pericula omnia, mortem etiam, si expediat, oppetendam praedicemus, non eundem sensum esse ceteris hominibus existimandum est. Nonnullis forsan eius rei facultatem deesse, at enim voluntatem omnibus eandem esse putandum est." *Historiae* 7.48, p. 326.

[294] *Historiae* 7.49, p. 326.

liberty" (*ius libertatemque tueri contendebant*).[295] Here Bruni seems to acknowledge that if Florence had *forced* its neighbour to come into its *potestas*, then Pistoia would have lost not just its legal autonomy, but also its freedom. It would, then, be the voluntary or involuntary nature of a people's submission to Florentine power which determines whether the newly created subjects hold a free or unfree status. But, again, we do not get—nor probably should we expect—absolute conceptual clarity from Bruni. The episode ends with the Pistoians consenting to receive the Florentine garrison, and Bruni draws a line under the episode with the rather evasive comment that "an enterprise which began badly in the end turned out well."[296]

We must conclude that Bruni demonstrates an ambivalence in the *Historiae* when treating Florence's relations with its Tuscan neighbours and eventual subjects. On the one hand, he clearly helps legitimate relationships of dependency between Florence and its subject populations. We saw that, particularly in the early books, he employs several of the classical Roman concepts which had featured in the *Laudatio* in order to portray once again Florentine foreign policy as guided by a concern to safeguard the liberty of foreign peoples. States of dependency, but not domination, thus continue to service an ideological purpose in Bruni's work. But on the other hand, we observed him in later books casting doubt on the benevolence of Florence's imperial intentions. When we reach the final books and the war against Giangaleazzo Visconti, we find that Bruni is prepared to present Florence as a dominating force in Italian politics. The shift is evident, for instance, in a speech of 1387 which Bruni is likely to have

[295] *Historiae* 7.50, p. 328.

[296] "Per hunc modum res male coepta bonum tandem exitum habuit." *Historiae* 7.51, p. 330.

invented.[297] He has Giovanni Ricci encourage his fellow Florentine citizens to prepare for war with the lord of Milan: "He [Giangaleazzo] takes into consideration that you who were born in a free city would find servitude unbearable; you are accustomed not only to not slaving [*servire*] for others, but to dominating them."[298] Bruni's Ricci had previously noted Giangaleazzo's "intense desire to dominate" (*naturam dominandi cupidissimam*) and "measureless thirst to extend [his] empire" (*sitim immensam extendendi imperii*), but this is a characterization which increasingly seems to apply to the Florentine people just as much as it does to the Milanese prince.[299]

Does Bruni, then, chart for Florence in the *Historiae* an imperial journey which ends with the republic presiding over unfree subjects? The way in which Bruni had constructed his account of Italian history in Book One seemed to suggest that in 1250 the freshly liberated Florentine people was poised to lead the restoration of Tuscany's ancient freedom; the region might once again comprise a constellation of free states, with Florence as its most brilliant. But Bruni appears to indicate that, by the turn of the fifteenth century, it is the Roman, not the Etruscan, example which Florence has ended up reproducing. The expansion of Florence's *imperium* has, at the very least, visibly encroached on its neighbours' liberty.

Bruni had gone further than any other humanist before him in problematizing the relationship between liberty and empire in the classical and post-classical periods. It seems, however, that other leading Florentine humanists were reluctant to press the issue. Indeed, the

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[297] As noted by Hankins: *Historiae*, pp. 419–20, n. 117.

[298] "Cogitat enim servitutem vos pati non posse, qui libera in civitate nati; non modo non servire, sed dominari aliis consuestis." *Historiae* 9.81, p. 86.

[299] *Historiae* 9.80, pp. 84–86.

more benevolent mode of conceptualizing empire that Bruni had exhibited in the *Laudatio* is pervasive across much of Florentine humanist political thought in the fifteenth century. For instance, in his highly Ciceronian *Vita civile* (c. 1435), Matteo Palmieri largely rehearses the same theory of just imperial rule found in the *Laudatio*, claiming that the Romans "always attempted both to augment and retain empire with benefits rather than through fear," and, as a result, "it was not subjects held by force, but friends who obeyed them in love and loyalty [*fede*], that were the defense of their realm."[300] It emerges that this mode of ruling imperial subjects is for Palmieri part of a broader theory of government as *tutela*—which he also borrows from *De officiis*—aiming not for the benefit of the governors, but the governed.[301] Moreover, at the close of the century, one of Bruni's successors as Chancellor of Florence, Bartolomeo Scala, explained in his *Apologia contra vituperatores civitatis Florentiae* (1496) that *fortuna*, and not Florentine imperial policy, was to blame for the loss of some of the republic's subject cities in the aftermath of Charles VIII's descent into Italy. Scala asks why would the people of Montepulciano "abandon faith" (*posthabendae fidei*) and "forget all the benefits" (*nostrorum beneficiorum obliviscendi*) that Florence had bestowed on them?[302] He insists that Florence had "guarded"

[300] "Sempre cercorono più tosto con benificii che per paura et acrescere et ritenere lo imperio … non i subditi che per forza si teneano, ma gli amici che per amore et per fede ubbidivano, erano la difesa del regno." Matteo Palmieri, *Vita civile*, ed. Gino Belloni (Florence: Sansoni, 1982), 3.119, p. 129. (My translation.)

[301] Palmieri, *Vita civile*, 3.136–37, p. 132, citing Cic. *Off.* 1.85.

[302] Bartolomeo Scala, *Apologia contra vituperatores civitatis Florentiae*, in *Bartolomeo Scala. Humanistic and Political Writings*, ed. Alison Brown (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997), 394–411, at 397. Translation from Bartolomeo Scala, *Essays and Dialogues*, trans. Renée Neu Watkins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

(*tuebamur*) these subjects and "received them into their faith as allies" (*in fidem reciperemus sociorum*).[303]

We can therefore observe the persistence of the Roman resources highlighted in Chapter One in Florentine humanist political thought throughout the fifteenth century. Nonetheless, in the *Historiae* Bruni had undoubtedly opened up a fissure in Florentine imperial ideology; it was now possible to wonder if Roman concepts such as *beneficium*, *tutela*, and *patrocinium* were in fact being used to mask a more sinister reality in Florence's subject territory. We shall now see how Machiavelli exploits these fault lines. Not only will he radically reassess the Roman conceptual resources that we have been tracking, but he will also embrace the concept of servitude when constructing a novel theory of imperial relations.

[303] Scala, *Apologia contra vituperatores*, 397.

CHAPTER 3

Machiavelli's Early Imperial Thinking, 1499–c. 1513

In this dissertation's opening two chapters, we observed in Florentine humanist political thought from the late fourteenth century up to the end of the fifteenth the recurring presence of a distinct set of classical conceptual materials with which Roman writers had configured relations between the Republic and its notionally free foreign subjects. However, we also saw that in the *Historiae* Leonardo Bruni brought into question the validity of the claim that Rome and Florence exercised a form of imperial rule which upheld or established the free status of subjected peoples. Against this backdrop, I give in this and the following chapter an account of how Machiavelli's thinking about empire evolved over some two decades; from the emergence of some integral concepts—as well as some stubborn conceptual problems—in his early political writings from 1499 onwards, to the more fully articulated imperial theory that he presents in the *Discorsi* in c. 1518. Whereas some of his humanist predecessors had drawn on certain Roman resources to advance a series of ideological *claims* about the legitimacy of Florence's territorial expansion, Machiavelli, thinking as always both with and against the Roman inheritance, lays out in the *Discorsi* a *theory* of empire. The novelty of this Machiavellian project to bring the imperial process under theoretical analysis has not been sufficiently recognized in the historiography and I offer in the next chapter a reconstruction of the theory's architecture. But before we come to the *Discorsi*, I want to piece together in this chapter the development of Machiavelli's earlier and necessarily

less systematic imperial thinking. In doing so, I survey a selection of his texts, beginning with some early governmental writings, and finishing with his first masterpiece of political science, *Il Principe* (c. 1513).[304] Although Machiavelli's political works before the *Discorsi* do not present us with successive redactions of a theory of empire, they do provide glimpses of concepts, arguments, and problems of an imperial nature that, taken together, lay some of the groundwork on which the later theory is raised.

We have seen that humanists attached to the Florentine chancery from Coluccio Salutati onwards sought to rebut accusations that Florence ruled its subjects in the *dominium* as slaves by taking up a range of conceptual models available to them in Roman writing. Of particular importance to the humanist ideological defence was the largely Stoic vision Cicero offers in some of his philosophical works of a global space in which Roman *imperium* and justice can coexist harmoniously, and even reinforce one another. We saw that the Leonardo Bruni of the *Laudatio* and the Matteo Palmieri of the *Vita civile* would both maintain that Florence's pursuit of empire traced a pattern of inter-state justice first established by the Roman people. It is true, however, that Florentine humanists would also have noted alternative ways in which the Romans conceptualized their imperial relations. Indeed, it would be impossible for any Renaissance humanist to fail to observe in Roman literature that different statuses were ascribed to the various peoples subjected to the Republic's *imperium*, ranging from those fully incorporated into the *res publica* as newly-minted Roman citizens, to those reduced to servitude following military conquest. But the fact remains that Florentine humanists went to some lengths to avoid describing their own imperial subjects as slaves.

[304] I again follow Giorgio Inglese's efforts to date *Il Principe*: Inglese, *Per Machiavelli*, 45–49.

I want to show that Machiavelli is, unlike these earlier humanists, perfectly willing to work with the category of slavery when conceptualizing a republic's relationships with its foreign subjects. We shall see that Machiavelli's thinking about the servile condition is in fact extremely fine-grained: the burden of slavery can be heavy or light, old or new, visible or invisible; yet it is slavery all the same. A crucial aspect of Machiavelli's imperial thinking is his unwavering view that a state cannot be said to be free if it has become subject to the power of sovereign command—which he calls *imperio*—of an alien agent. To preview one of the major arguments of this dissertation's second half, Machiavelli refuses to adhere to the liberating philosophical apparatus that Cicero had superimposed on the brute facts of Rome's imperial expansion and which Florentine humanists had found highly valuable when seeking to justify their own republic's subjection of other free peoples. I try to explain why Machiavelli constructs a theory of empire that, unshackled from the strictures of both Stoic natural law and Christian providentialism, begins with the premise that the republic's imperial growth almost invariably involves the movement of peoples between the states of liberty and servitude.

In Part One of this chapter I review some of Machiavelli's "minor political writings," including the *Discorso sopra Pisa* (1499), *De rebus Pistoriensibus* (1502), the *Parole da dirle sopra la provisione del danaio* (1503), *Del modo di trattare i popoli della Valdichiana ribellati* (1503), and a series of texts relating to the creation of the Florentine militia. Machiavelli's discussions of imperial matters in these works are naturally shaped by the need to address differing practical issues, as well as to satisfy different audience expectations and generic conventions. However, these texts are in a sense all of a piece, insofar as in each of them Machiavelli grapples with the overriding policy concern he had inherited with the office of

Second Chancellor: how to keep together Florence's *dominium* after it had been thrown into disarray following Charles VIII's invasion of Italy and the ensuing Italian Wars. We shall see in these early works the debuts of some of the principal terms of the conceptual language with which Machiavelli will discuss inter-state relations in his mature political thought. Above all, I want to show that in these minor writings Machiavelli repeatedly rubs up against, even if he is not able to confront with sustained theoretical elaboration, what is to be a fundamental concern of his theory of empire: what happens at an existential level to a state subjected to another state's *imperio*? Is it now an unfree subject state, or does it cease to be a state at all?

From Parts Two and Three I am concerned with the more conceptually probing treatment that imperial issues receive in *Il Principe*. In Part Two I examine Machiavelli's most general reflections in *Il Principe* on the imperial process (*Il Principe* 3), as well as how that process applies more specifically to the subjection of princely states (*Il Principe* 4). I then move to consider in Part Three how Machiavelli conceptualizes in this explicitly monarchical text the imperial subjection of republics, or free states (*Il Principe* 5).

I. EMPIRE IN MACHIAVELLI'S FIRST POLITICAL WRITINGS

There can be no doubt that Machiavelli was deeply preoccupied with imperial matters from the very beginning of his political career. In the *Discorso sopra Pisa*, dated to the summer of 1499, the year following his election as Second Chancellor, the thirty-year-old Machiavelli considers how Florence might recover its Tuscan neighbour, which it had lost in 1494 following Charles

VIII's arrival on the peninsula.[305] Although we cannot be certain to whom the *Discorso* was addressed, it seems that Machiavelli was offering his advice to members of one of the Florentine Republic's governmental committees. He begins the text by noting the general consensus that "to retake Pisa is necessary if Florence wants to maintain its liberty."[306] Machiavelli continues that he will focus only on the "methods" (*mezzi*) by which Pisa can be retaken. There are, he explains, just two: one he labels "force" (*forza*), and consists in laying siege to the city; the other he calls "love" (*amore*), and involves Pisa coming voluntarily into the Florentines' hands.[307] He turns first to the method of love, as it appears to offer a "safer" and therefore "more desirable" route to take. Introducing the text's second binary distinction, Machiavelli states that if this method is to work, then either the Pisans will have to "put themselves back into Florence's arms," or a "*signore*" must give Pisa to Florence as "a present."[308] We should note that at this moment Machiavelli conceptualizes the Pisans as free; they are their own masters and therefore can choose whether or not to hand their city over to the Florentines. But Machiavelli also

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[305] For the text's immediate political context, date, and possible intended audience, see Niccolò Machiavelli, *L'arte della guerra. Scritti politici minori*, ed. Jean-Jacques Marchand, Denis Fachard, and Giorgio Masi (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2001), 419–22. (Hereafter *Scritti politici minori.*) This volume's prefatory discussions of each of Machiavelli's minor works are essential sources for establishing the basic contextual information, and I rely on them below. In many cases, they offer modified versions of work presented in Jean-Jacques Marchand's seminal study: Jean-Jacques Marchand, *Niccolò Machiavelli. I primi scritti politici (1499–1512)* (Padua: Antenore, 1975). On Machiavelli's chancery career, see Robert Black, "Machiavelli, Servant of the Florentine Republic," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, 71–99, at 71; Robert Black, "Machiavelli in the Chancery," in *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*, ed. Najemy, 31–47; Andrea Guidi, *Un segretario militante. Politica, diplomazia e armi nel Cancelliere Machiavelli* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009); Robert Black, *Machiavelli* (London: Routledge, 2013), 30–70.

[306] "Che riavere Pisa sia necessario a volere mantenere la libertà, perché nessuno ne dubita." *Scritti politici minori*, 422. The translations of the *Discorso* and the other *Scritti politici minori* are my own.

[307] "O la forza o lo amore, cioè o recuperarla per assedio o che ella vi venga nelle mani voluntaria." *Scritti politici minori*, 422.

[308] "O che per loro medesimi vi si rimettino nelle braccia o che uno altro che ne sia signore ve ne facci un presente." *Scritti politici minori*, 422.

imagines a possible future in which a *signore* has deprived the Pisans of their liberty and thus the city's fate will be in his gift.

Although Machiavelli treats it second, let us take first the scenario in which Pisa is handed to Florence by a hypothetical *signore*. This figure will himself have entered Pisa, according to Machiavelli, either by "force" or by "love." However, in either eventuality the *signore* is unlikely to cede the city to the Florentines: if he has taken Pisa by force, then he will be strong enough to keep the prize for himself; if the Pisans have invited him in, then it is doubtful that he will be brazen enough to "break faith" and, under the pretext of providing for their defence, deliver them up to the Florentines as "prisoners."[309] This second course of events had actually transpired just a few months earlier in the spring of 1499 when, as Machiavelli notes, the Venetians had left Pisa to the Florentines "as prey."[310] But, presumably, he thinks that recent history is unlikely to repeat itself. It is important to see that in this discussion Machiavelli describes Pisa in terms which suggest that he is thinking of the city as an item of property. Machiavelli's notional *signore* is not only the lord, but also the "possessor" (*possessore*) of Pisa, and he may or may not choose to make a "present" of the city for Florence. Moreover, when Machiavelli envisions that the Pisans would become Florence's prisoners if such an exchange were to be made, he is projecting a picture of a subject population that is emphatically unfree. But what does Pisa's future look like if we follow the other possible branch of Machiavelli's method of love and the Pisans themselves volunteer to come back to Florence?

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[309] "Quando vi fussi entrato per forza, nessuna ragione vuole che ce la conceda: perché chi sarà sufficiente ad entrarvi per forza sarà ancora sufficiente a guadarla per sé e a preservarsela … Quando vi fussi entrato per amore e chiamato da' Pisani … non mi pare da credere che alcuno fussi per rompere loro la fede e, sotto nome di volerli difendere, li tradissi e dessivelli prigioni." *Scritti politici minori*, 423.

[310] "Lascerebbevela in preda come al presente hanno fatto e' Viniziani." *Scritti politici minori*, 423.

Machiavelli, in a very significant move, styles the Pisans' voluntary return to Florence's hands as a resubmission to Florentine "patronage" (*patrocinio*).[311] However, despite Pisa's current plight and lack of foreign aid, Machiavelli notes for his audience that the Pisans have shown no indication that they would "come voluntarily under your yoke."[312] Machiavelli thus equates the condition of being under Florentine patronage with that of being under a yoke, that is with one of the stock images of chattel slavery. The Pisans, then, are quite capable of seeing that surrendering to Florence means reverting to their condition as the Florentine people's unfree subjects. Machiavelli has turned on its head the patronal model of empire; in the case of Pisa, Florence does not liberate the enslaved, it enslaves the free.

Having eliminated the method of love, Machiavelli ends the *Discorso* by concluding that Florence must use *forza* if it wants to recover Pisa. We should not be surprised that Machiavelli's thinking finally leads us to this point when we consider that, in his mind, Florence is once more attempting to subject to servitude a free city.[313] Machiavelli will return to this challenging imperial problem, and to this specific Pisan example, in *Il Principe*. We shall see that in this later text a complex existential question arises that is also implicit here in the *Discorso*; what type of political entity *was* Pisa when it was under Florence's patronage and yoke?

We can shed some more light on this problem by examining Machiavelli's treatment of another instance of the breakdown of Florentine authority in the *dominium* in his *De rebus*

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[311] "Come e' si possa credere che loro medesimi sieno per ritornare sotto el patrocinio vostro." *Scritti politici minori*, 422.

[312] "Non si puote né debbe a nessun modo credere che per sé medesimi mai venghino voluntarii sotto el iugo vostro." *Scritti politici minori*, 423.

[313] I avoid "state," as the term *stato* is not used in this text, even if the concept may well be present.

Pistoriensibus. As we saw in Bruni's *Historiae*, Florence's relations with Pistoia had long been strained. Florence had sought formal recognition of its dominance over the *civitas* from as early as 1331, and twenty years later started interfering directly in the city's legislative activity.[314] During a hundred and fifty years or so of Florentine rule, Pistoia had become infamous for its struggles between the Cancellieri and Panciatichi factions, which had erupted once more in 1500, with the former expelling the latter from the city. Although the specific audience Machiavelli was addressing in *De rebus* is again uncertain, it is highly likely that the text belongs to discussions held at a *consulta*—an extraordinary meeting of members of the Florentine government—convened in March of 1502 to discuss the situation in Pistoia.[315] After the revolt of the Pisans, this second major insubordination in Florentine territory appeared ominous; Machiavelli begins his report by noting that the Florentine *signoria* had feared that Pistoia could go the same way as Pisa.[316]

In the text Machiavelli narrates the *signoria*'s military attempts to recover for Florence "the obedience of the city and its *contado*."[317] Machiavelli goes on to describe several occasions on which military commissioners were sent to the area with orders to "master" (*insignorirsi*) Pistoia and its surrounding territory. Indeed, Machiavelli gives no indication that the Florentine aim had been anything other than to recover by *forza* its lordship of the city. This, Machiavelli indicates, involved reestablishing the ties of command and obedience that had long bound the

[314] Tanzini, *Alle origini*, 51.

[315] See *Scritti politici minori*, 435–37.

[316] *Scritti politici minori*, 438.

[317] "Questa Signoria aveva perduta interamente la obbedienza e della città e del contado." *Scritti politici minori*, 438.

Pistoiese to the Florentines: the *signoria* decided after a further outbreak of factional strife that it had to "thoroughly master the city, and in such a way that it could command [it]."[318] As this had been achieved by the time Machiavelli was writing, he notes that how to "reform the city" in order to prevent future disturbances now depends entirely on the *signoria*'s "will" (*arbitrio*).[319]

We should perhaps expect to find this kind of unvarnished language of forceful mastery in a text almost certainly produced to inform a meeting of the Florentine governmental elite about the state of affairs in a rebellious territory. In fact, there is evidence that Machiavelli simply rearticulates in *De rebus* a language of command and obedience which had been spoken between the Florentines and the Pistoiese for generations. Stephen J. Milner has brought to light some Florentine documents dating from the end of the fourteenth century which record promises of obedience made by representatives of both Pistoia's main factions: the Cancellieri pledged that "their party would never deviate from those things which their *signoria* of Florence commanded," while the Panciatichi on their part affirmed that they "would never deviate from the commune of Florence's will."[320] This language is not only present here in *De rebus*, but, as we shall see, it is also carried over into Machiavelli's two major works of political philosophy. Although we are still waiting for the fundamental concepts of *stato* and *imperio* to appear, we can already observe a constant feature of what the imperial project entails in Machiavelli's

[318] "Si concluse che fusse prima da insignorirsi bene della città, e in modo che si potessi comandare." *Scritti politici minori*, 441.

[319] "Resta ora come si abbia a procedere avanti, e massime circa il modo di riformare la città; la quale cosa è tutta … posta nello arbitrio vostro." *Scritti politici minori*, 442.

[320] "Mai la loro parte non si deviò da chosa che per la loro Signoria da Firenze fosse loro comandato … lla parte loro era quella che mai non si deviò dalla voluntà del comune di Firenze." Milner, "Rubrics and requests," 318 n. 13. (My translation.)

understanding, namely the establishment between political entities of durable structures of command and obedience. If we again ask what exactly Machiavelli has in mind when he discusses a subject *città*, then in the case of Pistoia we will have to conclude that he conceptualizes the city as some kind of unfree entity, forced against its will to obey a foreign agent's commands, and thus left dependent on its *arbitrio*.

Machiavelli's rationale for wanting to think about relations between polities in such a way emerges more clearly in yet another official document composed amid the crisis of obedience in the *dominium*, the *Parole da dirle sopra la provisione del danaio*. The text's manuscript bears the note in Machiavelli's hand: "1503 *marzo. Contione*," suggesting the work's connection to debates about a fiscal law tabled in that month that was designed to fund attempts to restore order in the *dominium*. In choosing the label "*contione*," Machiavelli would seem to classify his work, in a self-consciously Romanizing fashion, as a piece of deliberative rhetoric to be delivered before a citizen assembly.[321] He has his speaker begin the oration, in a move anticipating the opening line of *Il Principe*, with a declarative statement about how polities are constituted: "All *città*, which for any time have been governed by an absolute prince, by aristocrats, or by the people, have had for their defence forces mixed with prudence."[322] Machiavelli goes on to state that these two things form the very "nerve of all the dominions [*signorie*] which have been and which will be in the world." So fundamental is the provision of

[321] Marchand has conjectured convincingly that Machiavelli wrote the *Parole* for Piero Soderini, recently elected Gonfaloniere for life, to deliver at a *consulta* held on 28 March to discuss the deteriorating conditions in the subject territory. *Scritti politici minori*, 444–45.

[322] "Tutte le città, le quali mai per alcun tempo si son governate per principe soluto, per ottimati, o per populo, come si governa questa, hanno aúto per defensione loro le forze mescolate con la prudenza." *Scritti politici minori*, 446.

arms (*armi*) and good sense (*senno*) that the lack of either is invariably the cause of "changes in political regime" (*le mutazioni de' regni*) and "the ruin of provinces and *città*."[323] He drives home the point that *forze* are indispensable to the survival of polities by pronouncing that without them "*città* are not maintained, but come to their end. The end is either by destruction or by servitude."[324]

At the bottom of these concerns lies an obvious question: why must a *città* expect to be destroyed or enslaved if it does not make provision to preserve itself by force? The perhaps equally obvious answer is that other polities will be seeking to destroy or enslave it using their own forces, and it may be tempting to conclude that Machiavelli simply operates with this realpolitik assumption and leave it at that. In his mature political thought, however, Machiavelli will go to some lengths to provide a philosophical explanation for why states are compelled to behave in this way, and even here in the brief *Parole* he offers some interesting reasons for adopting this position. In response to the objection that Florence need not provide its own forces for its defence, not least because it can outsource its "protection" (*protezione*) to the King of France, Machiavelli declares that "every *città*, every *stato*, should consider as enemies all those who can hope to occupy it and against whom it cannot defend itself. No *signore* or *repubblica* was ever wise that wanted to hold its *stato* at the discretion of others or, holding it in such a way, thought that it held it securely."[325] Here we have the first, concrete occurrence in Machiavelli's

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[323] "Sono dunque queste due cose el nervo di tutte le signorie che furno o che saranno mai al mondo; e chi ha osservato le mutazioni de' regni, le ruine delle province e delle città, non le ha vedute causare da altro che dal mancamento delle armi o del senno." *Scritti politici minori*, 446.

[324] "Sanza forze, le città non si mantengono, ma vengono al fine loro. El fine è o per desolazione o per servitú." *Scritti politici minori*, 447.

[325] "'Che ci bisogono forze? noi siamo in protezione del Re!' … vi si risponde tale opinione non potere essere piú temeraria: perché ogni città, ogni stato, debbe reputare inimici tutti coloro che possono sperare di poterle

political writings of the concept of the state, and we can immediately see that it is something which must be held in the face of others who want to acquire it. When we come to *Il Principe* and particularly the *Discorsi*, we shall see that a natural human acquisitiveness supplies the conceptual bedrock for Machiavelli's theory of empire. In the *Parole*, however, Machiavelli attempts to bring his audience round to his point of view, not by giving an account of human nature, but by calling for some political introspection.

Machiavelli's orator urges the Florentines to stop deceiving themselves and instead examine "our affairs," which first involves looking into "our breast," that is into the *dominium*. The Florentines should be able to observe from this perspective two connected facts: they are "disarmed," and their "subjects" (*sudditi*) are without "faith" (*fede*). This situation, Machiavelli notes, is to be expected, as "men cannot and should not be faithful slaves [*fedeli servi*] of that *signore* by whom they cannot be defended or disciplined."[326] The slippage, which occurs within a single sentence, from "*sudditi*" to "*servi*" signals a radical demystification—and one whose implications we shall consider below—of what the Florentine imperial project actually represents. Machiavelli goes on to remind the Florentines of their inability to discipline their faithless subjects in Pistoia, the Romagna, and Barga, all areas in which public order has unraveled to such an extent that they are now "nests and receptacles of every kind of robber."

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occupare el suo e da chi lei non si può difendere. Né fu mai né signore né repubblica savia che volessi tenere lo stato suo a discrezione d'altri o che, tenendolo, gliene paressi aver securo." *Scritti politici minori*, 448.

[326] "Non ci inganniamo a partito; esaminiamo un poco bene e' casi nostri; e cominciamo a guadarci in seno: voi vi troverrete disarmati, vedrete e' sudditi vostri sanza fede … e è ragionevole che sia cosí, perché gli uomini non possono e non debbono essere fedeli servi di quello signore, da el quale e' non possono essere né difesi né corretti." *Scritti politici minori*, 448. For the faithful slave as a commonplace of Roman literature, see *Lavan, Slaves to Rome*, 79, citing Joseph Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), ch. 7.

Moreover, Florence has also proved itself powerless to defend those subjects whom others have attacked; in fact, properly speaking, these peoples are no longer Florentine subjects, "but rather those of whoever is first to attack them."[327]

Machiavelli's brief review of the state of play in the *dominium* is clearly intended to serve as a wake-up call to the Florentine elite, but it also reveals something about how he conceptualizes this space. Although Machiavelli could not be much further from the Aristotelian view that the state is modelled on the household, it is significant that he is inclined here to domesticate the *dominium*, noting that his discussion pertains to Florence's "*casa*."[328] The relationship between Florence and the rebellious peoples in its subject territory thus appears to be analogous to that between a *signore* and his unfaithful slaves. While we saw that Salutati had wanted to identify Florence's subjects as former slaves whom it had liberated from an alien *dominus*, for Machiavelli it is Florence that is the *signore*. If the republic is to put its house in order, then it will have to re-master the subject communities by force; indeed, it is only *forza* that will guarantee their *fede*. But recognition of these home truths should also make the Florentines more aware of their standing outside their *casa*. Machiavelli's implication seems to be that the subjects in the *dominium* are in the type of unfree, dependent position with respect to Florence that the Florentines should at all costs avoid finding themselves in with respect to a greater power, such as the King of France. The only way to escape such dependency and achieve true self-reliance is to organize sufficient forces to defend the state. Florence's continued existence as

[327] "Come voi gli avete possuti o possete correggere, lo sa Pistoia, Romagna, Barga, e' quali luoghi sono diventati nidi e ricettaculi d'ogni qualità di latrocinii … Né gli possete chiamare vostri sudditi, ma di coloro che fieno e' primi ad assaltarli." *Scritti politici minori*, 448.

[328] Machiavelli signals a switch of focus at the end of his discussion of the *dominium* by saying: "Uscitevi ora di casa e considerate chi voi avete intorno." *Scritti politici minori*, 448.

a political entity would then not rely on the *discrezione* of a protector like the French king and others would have to think twice before trying to master it: "do not, by remaining disarmed, encourage a foreign power to ask to have you from the king as prey; nor give the king a reason to have to leave you among the abandoned, but do things in such a way that he has to hold you in esteem and that others will not think of subjugating you."[329] In short, Machiavelli's advice is for Florence to ensure that it can force others to depend on it for their security, while avoiding the same fate for itself. This troubling thought that maintaining liberty might require subjecting others will take on growing importance in Machiavelli's imperial thinking.

If we step back and look at the picture of the political landscape which Machiavelli sketches in the *Parole*, we will notice three distinctive features. First, the concept of fidelity is conspicuous here, as indeed it is in the picture of just inter-state relations presented by Cicero in *De officiis* and copied and adapted by Bruni and other Florentine humanists. However, for Machiavelli there is no natural law or divine providence which might compel peoples and states to keep faith with one another; only force is guaranteed to do this. As he remarks when discussing how much store Florence should set by any friendship made with Pope Alexander VI and his son Cesare Borgia, "among private men, laws, writings and pacts make them observe *fede*, among *signori* only arms make them observe it."[330] A second characteristic of the landscape Machiavelli depicts is that it is one which political agents are continually attempting to

[329] "El rimedio è fare d'essere in tale ordine di forze che gli abbi in ogni sua deliberazione ad avere rispetto a voi come agli altri di Italia, e non dare animo, con lo stare disarmati, ad uno potente di chiedervi ad el re in preda; né dare occasione ad el re che vi abbi a lasciare fra e' perduti, ma fare in modo che vi abbi a stimare, né altri abbi opinione di subiurgarvi." *Scritti politici minori*, 449.

[330] "Fra gli uomini privati, le leggi, le scritte, e' patti fanno osservare la fede, e fra e' signori la fanno solo osservare l'armi." *Scritti politici minori*, 450.

domesticate, and thereby make their property. Whereas earlier humanists had wanted to represent ideologically the *dominium* as a space in which Florence exerted influence over its non-citizen subjects without fully subsuming them into its body politic, Machiavelli is happy to describe the *dominium* as Florence's *casa* and suggest that at least some of the subjects within it are best understood as unruly slaves. Although the humanists had deployed various concepts drawn from Roman Republican writing to domesticate Florence's imperial relations, the one household relationship they studiously avoided was that of master-slave; for Machiavelli, however, this relation becomes the archetype. Finally, Machiavelli, in line with the other humanists, makes the concept of protection indispensable to his understanding of inter-state relations. But he departs once again from his predecessors by stressing that the security which a community receives from a more powerful protector does not amount to liberty. Bonds of fidelity were forged under the defensive shield which Florence had previously held over communities such as Pistoia and Barga, yet, as these communities belonged to the Florentine *dominium*, this was a fidelity within a master-slave relationship. The relation between Florence and the French king differs somewhat, as Louis XII does not (yet) hold as property Florence and its territory. Machiavelli's speaker is insistent, however, that the Florentines' increasing reliance on the king for their defence places them in a highly precarious position, and one which seems to hover between the states of freedom and servitude. In this spirit Machiavelli ends the *Parole* by reminding the Florentines that they are free and that their liberty lies, for now, in their own hands; how much longer those who were "born free and desire to live freely" will remain in this state if they

continue to trust in others for the preservation of their liberty he leaves for his audience to ponder.[331]

In the three works examined so far we have been afforded some fleeting glances of Machiavelli's mental picture of the Florentine *dominium*, the agents within it, and the forces which can work to hold it together or pull it apart. But it is in *Del modo di trattare i popoli della Valdichiana ribellati* that we come closest, before we reach the major works of political thought, to a sustained theoretical analysis of an imperial space and what happens within it. In *Del modo* we can observe for the first time Machiavelli's procedure of developing out of Livian materials a political theory, a procedure which will of course characterize his approach in the *Discorsi*; indeed, the basic argument of *Del modo* and the Livian passage on which it is founded will both be incorporated into a chapter of the later text.[332]

Composed in July or August of 1503, just a few months after the *Parole*, Machiavelli's concern in *Del modo* is once more with Florence's fraying authority in the *dominium*. Encouraged by Cesare Borgia's intriguing, Arezzo and the rest of the Valdichiana had rebelled in June of the previous year and, after an ineffectual Florentine settlement, the region was again ripening for revolt.[333] As Machiavelli himself puts it, Borgia seemed to be aspiring to "the

[331] "La fortuna non muta sentenzia dove non si muta ordine, né e' cieli vogliono o possono sostenere una cosa che voglia ruinare ad ogni modo. Il che io non posso credere che sia, veggendovi Fiorentini liberi e essere nelle mani vostre la vostra libertà: alla quale credo che voi arete quelli respetti che ha aúto sempre chi è nato libero e desidera viver libero." *Scritti politici minori*, 452.

[332] *Discorsi* 2.23.

[333] For this context, see *Scritti politici minori*, 458–59. For a fuller treatment, see Black, "Arezzo, the Medici and the Florentine Regime."

imperio of Tuscany," and its absorption, along with his other "*stati*," into a new "*regno*."[334] Fortunately for Florence, the threat of a Borgia-inspired rebellion in the Valdichiana would recede with Alexander VI's death on 18 August, just a few weeks after Machiavelli wrote *Del modo*. But before the pope's untimely death the situation in the Valdichiana certainly alarmed the Florentines, as the records of some of that summer's *consulte* attest,[335] not least because the exiled Medici had been using Arezzo as a powerbase. Machiavelli appears to have drafted *Del modo*, which survives only in a fragmentary state, as a kind of policy-positioning speech on the then urgent Valdichiana issue, presumably to be delivered by a senior member of the government before a *consulta* or some other deliberative body.

In the form the text has come down to us, *Del modo* opens by transporting its audience to 338 BCE and the diplomatic aftermath of the Latin War. Machiavelli renders into Italian, with some significant revisions and omissions, the senatorial speech which Livy gives to the consul L. Furius Camillus.[336] As Stephen Oakley has noted, Camillus's oration occupies the centre of Livy's second pentad, and the settlement of Latium with which it is concerned represents "one of the most significant moments in Roman history."[337] Livy's Camillus urges the senate to resolve decisively the manner in which it will pacify the Latins—literally "by which method we may hold them quiet in perpetual peace"[338]—presenting for the senators' consideration two sharply

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[334] "Egli aspiri allo imperio di Toscana, come piú propinquo e atto a farne un regno con li altri stati." *Scritti politici minori*, 465.

[335] *Scritti politici minori*, 458–60.

[336] Livy 8.13–14.

[337] S. P. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy, Books VI–X*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 535–71, at 38.

[338] "Reliqua consultatio est, quoniam rebellando saepius nos sollicitant, quonam modo perpetua pace quietos obtineamus." Livy 8.13.13–14.

contrasting policies. One involves the imposition of a punishment (*poena*) whereby—in a phrase which seems to have inspired the famous punchline to the anti-imperial speech delivered by Tacitus's Calgacus[339]—all of Latium is made into "vast wastelands" (*vastas inde solitudines facere*). The other option, which Camillus himself appears to favour, is to benefit (*beneficio*) the Latins by receiving them into citizenship (*in civitatem accipiendo*). Enacting this second policy, which recommends itself by its conformity to Roman ancestral practice, would "enlarge Rome" and "furnish material to grow to the highest glory." Moreover, by refraining from cruelty in victory, Rome would shore up the foundations of its power: "that *imperium* is by far the most secure which people are glad to obey."[340] Following Camillus's speech, the senate decides to treat the various Latin communities on a case-by-case basis, imposing a settlement whose details complicate considerably the consul's simple binarism. One particularly awkward point is that, contrary to what Camillus had suggested, the grant of citizenship—which came to the Latins in different versions; for instance, with or without the vote (*civitas optimo iure* and *civitas sine suffragio*)[341]—in some cases features as part of a package of punitive measures. Machiavelli gives a simplified, and somewhat inaccurate,[342] summary of the first portion of Livy's account of the settlement, cutting the text short just before Livy mentions that the Antiates, who would seem

[339] Tac. *Agr*. 30.5. Oakley, *A Commentary*, 536.

[340] "Voltis crudeliter consulere in deditos victosque? Licet delere omne Latium, vastas inde solitudines facere, unde sociali egregio exercitu per multa bella magnaque saepe usi estis. Voltis exemplo maiorum augere rem Romanam victos in civitatem accipiendo? Materia crescendi per summam gloriam suppeditat. Certe id firmissimum longe imperium est quo oboedientes gaudent." Livy 8.13.15–17.

[341] On the distinction between the two forms of citizenship within the context of the Latin settlement, see Oakley, *A Commentary*, 542–54 and bibliography cited therein.

[342] For instance, Machiavelli says that all the Veliterni were exiled, whereas Livy refers only to the senators.

to fall on the side of those who were punished by Rome, were given a form of Roman citizenship.[343] We shall return later to consider citizenship as one of the imperialist's potential tools of coercion and examine the extent to which the concept figures as such in Machiavelli's theory of republican empire.

Whereas in *Discorsi* 2.23 Machiavelli will quote from the original Latin of Camillus's speech with near-perfect precision, the fairly loose and lacunose Italian translation which he provides in *Del modo* offers us an opportunity to examine his transliteration of the classical conceptual material. Machiavelli's Italian seems to take up with little modification the concepts of cruelty (*incrudelire*) and forgiveness (*perdonare*), punishment (*pena*) and benefit (*premio*) that are embedded in the Livian speech. But he makes two particularly interesting conceptual revisions. While Livy's Camillus had pronounced that *imperium* is most secure where "people are glad to obey," in Machiavelli's words the consul declares that "that *imperio* is most secure which has faithful subjects who are affectionate towards their *principe*."[344] Machiavelli thus substitutes Livy's notion of a willing obedience with the concept of fidelity, and makes those who for Livy are merely the subjects of *imperium* into the subjects of both *imperio* and a *principe*, a prince who can only be the Roman people. Neither the notion that securing obedience to *imperium* involves establishing and maintaining *fides*, nor the identification of the Roman people as a *princeps* with regards to its imperial subjects was at all alien to Roman Republican

[343] "To Antium likewise a colony was dispatched, with an understanding that the Antiates might be permitted, if they liked, themselves to enroll as colonists; their war-ships were taken from them and their people were forbidden the sea; they were granted citizenship [*civitas data*]." Livy 8.14.8–9. Oakley, *A Commentary*, 543 notes that Livy seems to suggest Antium was incorporated *optimo iure*.

[344] "Quello imperio essere fermissimo che ha i sudditi suoi fedeli e al suo principe affezionati." *Scritti politici minori*, 461.

thought,[345] but it is revealing that Machiavelli would seem to want to position these conceptual points in the foreground of his discussions of empire, even when they are absent from his classical source.

The second significant conceptual innovation that Machiavelli introduces into his version of the Livian passage involves his use of the verb "*assicurarsi*," or "to secure oneself." Although the concern that Rome takes the appropriate measures to guard itself against future Latin insurrections is very much present in Livy's text, no one verb is used to capture the idea.[346] But Machiavelli deploys *assicurarsi* three times, twice with regards to Rome's security against the Latins taken collectively and once with reference to the Antiates alone.[347] Where Livy's Camillus informs the senators that they can "hold fast" the Latins in a "perpetual peace," Machiavelli's consul simply notes that "you can secure yourself against them forever."[348] Machiavelli does not provide translations for Livy's two references in the passage to *pax*, and thus in his hands the concept of peace-making becomes solely identified with the victor's security. Again, it is not that Machiavelli's revisions radically divert him from a Livian line of thinking; it is more a case of him distilling the classical materials into a more concentrated conceptual language.

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[345] For *fides*, see Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 186–90. For *populus princeps*, see Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 91.

[346] Livy uses "obtineo" and "attineo" when referring to "holding" the Latins in "perpetual peace." Livy, 8.13.13–15.

[347] *Scritti politici minori*, 461–62.

[348] Cf. Livy 8.13.14: "Itaque pacem vobis, quod ad Latinos attinet, parare in perpetuum vel saeviendo vel ignoscendo potestis," and *Scritti politici minori*, 461: "potere in perpetuo assicurarvene." Also cf. Livy 8.13.13: "Reliqua consultatio est, quoniam rebellando saepius nos sollictant, quonam modo perpetua pace quietos obtineamus," and *Scritti politici minori*, 461: "Restaci ora a consultare, perché spesso ribellandosi e ci mettono in pericolo, come noi dobbiamo per l'avvenire assicurarcene."

Finally, there is a curious omission. The connection that Livy's Camillus had drawn between Roman growth and the granting of citizenship is obscured in Machiavelli's rendition of the speech, as his Camillus does not mention citizenship, but notes instead that the Romans had in the past "grown the Roman Republic, making those whom they had conquered come to live in Rome."[349] As Machiavelli himself makes clear when he sketches Livy's report of the Latin settlement, the forcible movement of peoples to Rome is more obviously a punitive measure and it is strange that he seems to associate it here with admission into Roman citizenship. Although those whom the Romans made *cives optimo iure* would need to travel to Rome if they were to exercise their new voting rights, Livy's text does not give the impression that any of the Latins who were "benefited" in 338 BCE with the grant of *civitas*, in whatever form, were made to abandon their communities and relocate to Rome. Furthermore, when Machiavelli comes to apply the lessons which he extracts from this episode of Roman history to the Valdichiana problem, citizenship again drops out of view. Perhaps he doubted that Arezzo and the other Valdichiana communities could realistically be made to accept *en masse* Florentine citizenship, but, whatever the reason for its retreat in *Del modo*, Machiavelli will firmly lodge the concept of citizenship into his theory of republican empire when he comes to examine more attentively Rome's imperial practice in Book Two of the *Discorsi*.

After quoting from Livy, Machiavelli goes on to offer a commentary on the passage, pointing out for his audience what the source reveals about Rome's imperial practice and explaining why the classical example remains instructive to those who must also confront

[349] "Se volete con lo esemplo de' maggiori vostri accrescere la republica romana, faccendo venire ad abitare in Roma quelli che gli avevono vinti." *Scritti politici minori*, 461.

rebellious subjects. As we might expect, Machiavelli is immediately attracted to the binarism present in the Livian text, observing that the Romans' procedure was "to earn their [i.e. the rebellious areas] *fede* with *benefizii* or to treat them in such a way that they would never again have to fear them."[350] The Romans correctly perceived that some political decisions are innately forked and were thus able to avoid the dangers of taking a compromised "*via di mezzo*." As Hörnqvist has argued convincingly, Machiavelli's insistence that the Florentines would do well to recognize this point when contemplating the Valdichiana problem is directed at some influential members of the republic's government—sarcastically called "*i savi*" by Machiavelli—who tended to favour a moderate approach to foreign policy.[351] The records of a *consulta* held on 28 January 1506 seem to indicate that the merits of Machiavelli's viewpoint were seriously debated, even if in the end the government resolved to persist in its policy of the *via di mezzo*.[352] But despite Machiavelli's ultimate failure in this instance to influence political practice, it is worth probing more deeply the theoretical basis of his advice in *Del modo*, as it reveals some important, and seemingly constant, presuppositions of his imperial thinking.

An obvious point, but one with challenging ethical ramifications, is that Machiavelli is willing to advocate a series of measures which Livy's Camillus associates with violence and cruelty.[353] Machiavelli notes that if the Romans found it impossible to "reconcile" (*recongiliarli*)

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[350] "Puossi per questa deliberazione considerare come i Romani, nel giudicare di queste loro terre ribellate, pensarono che bisognasse o guadagnare la fede loro con i benefizii o trattarle in modo che mai piú ne potessero dubitare." *Scritti politici minori*, 462.

[351] Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 103–111, and 106 n. 102 for further bibliography on *Del modo*.

[352] Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 106–07.

[353] In his translation of Camillus's speech, Machiavelli seems to use "incrudelire" and "acerbamente correggere" to render Livy's "saeviendo" and "crudeliter consulere." *Scritti politici minori*, 461.

rebellious subjects to their rule by "benefiting" (*benifcando*) them, then they ensured that such peoples "could never do harm again."[354] This was achieved on the one hand by the destruction of cities (*rovinare le città*) and the forced relocation of their inhabitants to Rome, and on the other by the partial or complete colonization of rebellious areas.[355] Machiavelli concludes that the (supposed) "unmaking" (*disfacendo*) of Velitrae and the colonization of Antium exemplify respectively these two methods whereby Rome was able to "secure itself" (*assicurarsi*).[356] Again, we can observe that Machiavelli elevates to paramount importance the imperial state's security, brought about in this case by the destruction of other political communities and the enforced dispersion or reconstitution of subject populations. Indeed, although the Florentines in 1502 had successfully followed in the Romans' footsteps and "regained with benefits" (*riguadagnarli con i benefizii*) the Valdichiana communities of Cortona, Castiglione, Borgo Sansepolcro, and Foiano, their policy towards Arezzo had failed in Machiavelli's view to "secure ourselves against them" (*assicurarsene*). While the Florentines let the "caressed" Valdichiana communities "maintain their statutes" (*si siano mantenuti i capitoli*), they inflicted on Arezzo a litany of abuses, making the Aretines present themselves daily in Florence, stripping them of their offices (*onori*), publically insulting them, selling off their possessions, and garrisoning troops in their houses. But although these impositions could hardly be said to amount to a

[354] "Beneficando quelli che si poteva sperare di reconcigliarli; e quelli altri, di chi non si sperava, trattando in modo che mai per alcuno tempo potessono nuocere." *Scritti politici minori*, 462.

[355] "L'uno era di rovinare le città e mandare gli abitatori a Roma; l'altro, o spogliarle delli abitatori vecchi e mandarvi de' nuovi, o lasciandovi i vechhi, mettervi tanti de' nuovi che i vecchi non potessero mai né macchinare, né deliberare alcuna cosa contro al senato." *Scritti politici minori*, 462.

[356] "I quali due modi dello assicurarsi usarono *etiam* in questo iudizio, disfacendo Veliterno e mandando nuovi abitatori in Anzio." *Scritti politici minori*, 462.

"*benefizio*," Machiavelli's point is that Florence did not go far enough in securing itself against Arezzo, leaving intact the city walls, letting most of the population continue to live in the city, and not sending in colonists who might have "held them [i.e. the Aretines] under" (*li tenghino sotto*).[357] Machiavelli characterizes Florence's recent Aretine policy of half-measures as "so much cruelty" (*tanto incrudelito*), yet this is not a cruelty which, so to speak, had been used well, for it had confirmed in their hostility towards Florence subjects who for some time had shown themselves to be unfaithful (*la poca fede delli Aretini*).[358] Machiavelli will of course elaborate to revolutionary effect in his major works of political thought the point that rulers of states must be brutally honest with themselves about what it means to be cruel and to be kind.

The rough theoretical framework assembled in *Del modo* from what we can now recognize as the key concepts of benefit and security lies behind one of Machiavelli's more powerful programmatic statements. In *Discorsi* 2.23, just before he quotes from Camillus's speech, Machiavelli defines "government" as "nothing other than holding subjects in such a way that they cannot nor must not harm you; this is accomplished either by securing yourself against them completely [*assicurarsene in tutto*], depriving them of any way to harm you, or by benefiting them [*benificarli*] so that it would be unreasonable for them to desire a change of fortune."[359] But the theoretical move made in *Del modo* that may have the greatest bearing on

[357] "Non si chiama benefizio, ogni dí farli venire a Firenze, avere tolto loro gli onori, vendere loro le possessioni, sparlarne pubblicamente, avere tenuti loro i soldati in casa. Non si chiama assicurarsene lasciare le mura in piedi, lasciarvene abitare e' cinque sesti di loro, non dare loro compagnia di abitatori che li tenghino sotto." *Scritti politici minori*, 463.

[358] *Scritti politici minori*, 463–64.

[359] "Uno governo non è altro che tenere in modo i sudditi che non ti possano o debbano offendere: questo si fa o can assicurarsene in tutto, togliendo loro ogni via di nuocerti, o con benificarli in modo che non sia ragionevole ch'eglino abbiano a desiderare di mutare fortuna." *Discorsi* 2.23, p. 196.

Machiavelli's subsequent imperial thinking is the connection which he seems to make between subjection to imperial rule and slavery. He begins the text's most philosophical passage by remarking that "I have heard it said that history is the teacher of our actions, and especially those of *principi*." In citing this humanist commonplace, Machiavelli is preparing to expose the failure of his humanist-trained peers in the Florentine government to imitate the actual political practices of antiquity. And we may well appreciate why they have failed to do so, as, by predicating his political theory on what he takes to be the fundamentals of human behaviour as revealed in history, Machiavelli presents a profoundly discomforting spectacle. According to him, the historical record shows that "the world has always been inhabited in this way by men who have always had the same passions." These passions, he goes on, have forever manifested themselves in two basic types of human agent: "there have always been those who *serve* and those who *comanda*." We should note in passing that Aristotle's thesis of natural slavery is not rearing its head here; the point Machiavelli is making is simply that human passional conflict has always had its winners and losers, not that certain people are naturally predisposed to slavery. Machiavelli breaks down the first group of agents "those who *serve* unwillingly and those who *serve* willingly, and those who rebel and are retaken."[360] He then draws a parallel between the Latins and the peoples of the Valdichiana, collapsing the distance between past and present to theorize a kind of trans-historical rebellious subject. With this theoretical modus operandi in place, Machiavelli can proceed to lay out his advice that the Florentines imitate the "lords of the

[360] "Io ho sentito dire che le istorie sono la maestra delle azioni nostre, e massime de'principi; e il mondo fu sempre ad un modo abitato da uomini che hanno avute sempre le medesime passioni e sempre fu chi serve e chi comanda, e chi serve malvolentieri e chi serve volentieri, e chi si ribella e è ripresso." *Scritti politici minori*, 462.

world" (*padroni del mondo*) and attempt to reacquire their subjects by eschewing the *via di mezzo*.[361]

When trying to interpret this grand, yet quickly vanishing, vision of a thoroughly imperialized global space, a great deal rides on how we translate the verb *servire*. The most obvious choice perhaps is "to serve."[362] However, as Lavan has pointed out with regards to classical Latin literature, a "common misconception is that the verb *servire* means no more than 'to serve.' On the contrary, it is an integral part of the language of chattel slavery." And although Lavan acknowledges that *servire* can be used in "a more abstract sense … to denote subjection in general," the association between the verb and its cognate noun *servus* (a slave) "is always there to be recuperated."[363] With Machiavelli's invocation in *Del modo* of a Roman imperial context in mind, I think we must presume that when he uses *servire* in this text the verb's semantic reach embraces not only "to serve" and "to be subject to," but also "to slave." Even if we do not take him to mean that all who *comanda* are masters and all who *serve* are slaves, Machiavelli nevertheless does seem to want to leave the concept of servitude hanging over his political theory in *Del modo*. And this interpretation becomes only more plausible when we recall the language of mastery and slavery that Machiavelli had articulated while discussing the Florentine *dominium* in the three other early political writings examined above. It is certainly hard to see how rebellious peoples who are punished with the destruction of their cities and their forced migration to the imperial centre can be understood as being free, unless citizenship is allocated

[361] *Scritti politici minori*, 463.

[362] Peter Constantine makes this choice in his translation of *Del modo*: Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Essential Writings of Machiavelli*, ed. and trans. Peter Constantine (New York: Random House, 2007), 361.

[363] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 78.

some role in the theory, which it is not here. But the critical question is does Machiavelli think that those who are not punished but benefited by the imperial state—for instance, those "caressed" Valdichiana communities whom Florence allowed to keep their statutes—continue to enjoy their freedom? Machiavelli gives no definitive answer here, suggesting only that such previously unruly peoples can be transformed by the receipt of benefits into subjects who "*serve volentieri*." Yet determining quite what it means to be the willing subject of an imperial state raises questions about the psychology of subjection that become increasingly prominent as we move into Machiavelli's later political thought.

Machiavelli's professional concern as a government functionary to reaffirm Florence's control over the *dominium*, and thereby also strengthen the state's external security, culminated in his involvement in the Florentine militia project. The idea of creating for Florence a standing army was in Machiavelli's mind since 1504, if not earlier, and over the following years he promoted the militia in his correspondence, drafted the legislation with which it was instituted, and personally supervised in the *contado* the recruitment of conscripts. That Machiavelli was at the very centre of the militia project is confirmed by his appointment in 1507 as Chancellor of the Nine of the Militia. This was a new magisterial body created to administer the army in peacetime, and Machiavelli held his post up to September 1512 when the Medici dissolved the Nine.[364]

[364] On the militia project, see C. C. Bayley, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1961), 240–67; John M. Najemy, "The Controversy surrounding Machiavelli's service to the Republic," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, 101–17; Mikael Hörnqvist, "Perché non si usa allegare i Romani: Machiavelli and the Florentine Militia of 1506," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55.1 (2002): 148–191; John M. Najemy, "'Occupare la tirannide.' Machiavelli, the militia, and Guicciardini's accusation of tyranny," in *Della tirannia. Machiavelli con Bartolo*, ed. Jérémie Barthas (Florence: Olschki, 2007), 75–108; Jérémie Barthas, "Machiavelli, from the Ten to the Nine: A hypothesis based on the financial history of early modern Florence," in *From Florence to the Mediterranean and Beyond: Essays in Honour of Anthony Molho*, ed. Diogo Ramada Curio, Eric R. Dursteler, Julius Kirshner, and Francesca Trivellato

A hostility towards mercenary forces and the conviction that a well-organized state must make provision for its own defence are points that will be familiar to readers of Machiavelli's mature political thought,[365] and it is quite clear that these same beliefs animate his proposals in the four minor political writings relating to the militia project.[366] But, in attempting to wean Florence off its dependency on foreign mercenaries, Machiavelli was not, at least initially, advocating the establishment of a citizen army. In fact, Machiavelli is quite explicit that the ranks of the militia should be filled at first by Florentine subjects recruited from the *dominium*, a theory which he would then follow through in practice as chief recruiting officer. This fact may seem surprising in light of Machiavelli's persistent anxiety about the loyalty of Florence's subject population. Such concerns, however, did not fade away; indeed, they saturate Machiavelli's thinking about the militia. For Machiavelli, militarizing parts of the *dominium* had as much to do with securing domestic obedience as it did with enabling Florence to repel foreign invasion.

As Jean-Jacques Marchand has noted, a tight connection between political and military organization is evident in Machiavelli's thinking about the state from the minor writings up to the major works of theory.[367] Machiavelli opens *La cagione dell'ordinanza* of 1506, his first

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(Florence: Olschki, 2009), 157–66; Robert Black, "Machiavelli and the Militia: New Thoughts," *Italian Studies* 69.1 (2014): 41–50; Jérémie Barthas, "Machiavelli, the Republic, and the Financial Crisis," in *Machiavelli on Liberty and Conflict*, ed. David Johnston, Nadia Urbinati, and Camila Vergara (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 257–79.

[365] See especially *Il Principe* 12; *Discorsi* 1.21.

[366] *La cagione dell'ordinanza* and the *Provisione della ordinanza* are concerned with the foundation of the infantry militia of 1506, and the *Discorso sulla milizia a cavallo* and *L'ordinanza de' cavalli* with the creation of cavalry units in 1510/11.

[367] *Scritti politici minori*, Premessa ix.

extant work on the militia project, by explaining that he will not waste time debating the merits of arming the state (*ordinare lo stato vostro alle armi*), as these should be self-evident to all: "everyone knows that whoever speaks of an empire, a kingdom, a principality, a republic, whoever speaks of men who command … speaks of justice and arms."[368] Unfortunately, Machiavelli continues, Florence currently has "little justice and no arms at all," and the only way to restore both is "by public deliberation, and with good order, to arm the state and maintain it."[369] Perhaps Machiavelli here is simply observing that there is little point speaking of justice where it cannot be enforced. But he does seem keen to point out that justice is fundamentally about ensuring that it is public institutions, and not private interests, that determine how violence is given order. In any case, remaining unarmed is untenable; Machiavelli warns the Florentines that if things are not put right then it will "be impossible to preserve your liberty."[370] And the importance of providing for justice and arms when constituting or reconstituting the state recurs in the preamble to the *Provisione della ordinanza*, Machiavelli's draft of the law that would regulate the militia: "republics and states, which in the past were maintained and increased, had as their first foundation justice and arms." But in this text Machiavelli goes on to clarify what exactly these two things enable the state to do, namely "to restrain subjects and to defend itself

[368] "Ognuno sa che chi dice imperio, regno, principato, repubblica, chi dice uomini che comandono … dice iustizia e armi." *Scritti politici minori*, 470.

[369] "Voi della iustizia ne avete non molta, e dell'armi non punto; e el modo a riavere l'uno e l'altro è solo ordinarsi all'armi per deliberazione pubblica, e con buon ordine, e mantenerlo." *Scritti politici minori*, 470.

[370] "Vedrete essere impossibile potere perservare la vostra libertà in quel medesimo modo." *Scritti politici minori*, 470.

from enemies."[371] About four years later, in another preamble to another draft law, *L'ordinanza de' cavalli*, Machiavelli recapitulates this point, expressing his hope that strengthening the militia with the addition of cavalry units will "discourage enemies and increase the faith of subjects and the security and fixity of their state."[372] Indeed, the idea that introducing greater military order into the *dominium* will produce a more durable, more bonded political entity is Machiavelli's major theme here, as he begins the law's proem by telling Florence's *signori* that, after the success of the infantry militia, he has been continuously trying to think up other *modi* with which to make "more secure the Florentine *dominio*, the present *stato*, and liberty."[373]

Although the plan for the militia now emerges as a means by which to tighten Florence's grip on the *dominium*, Machiavelli remains mindful of the dangers associated with arming a subject population. In the fragmentary *Discorso sulla milizia a cavallo*, composed when preparing the ground for *L'ordinanza de' cavalli*, Machiavelli recognizes that people may have concerns that an "armed *contado*" will refuse to obey Florence. His response is that justice has the capacity to make armies obedient and, more concretely, this particular army will be commanded by Florentine citizens.[374] But it is at the initial stage of the militia project in the

[371] "Le republiche e stati, che per lo addietro si sono mantenuti e accresciuti, hanno avuto per loro primo fondamento la iustizia e le armi per possere frenare li sudditi e difendersi dalli inimici." *Scritti politici minori*, 477.

[372] "Sperando per tale ordine, quando sia buono e bene ordinato, tôrre animo agli inimici, crescere fede alli sudditi e sicurtà e fermezza allo stato loro." *Scritti politici minori*, 523–24.

[373] "Considerato li nostri magnifici e eccelsi Signori di quanta sicurtà, reputazione e utilità sia stata alla vostra repubblica e sia l'Ordinanza delle fanterie, e pensando per questo continuamente de' modi da rendere piú securo el dominio fiorentino e presente stato e libertà." *Scritti politici minori*, 523.

[374] "E chi dicesse e' si farebbono tiranni e il contado armato ha non ci ubbidire noi e anco l'ordine delle fanterie; rispondo … al secondo, che la iustizia e l'avere per loro capo i cittadini, li farenne ubbidienti: perché la iustizia fa obbedienti li eserciti interi, dove non è se non arme." *Scritti politici minori*, 521.

Cagione that we find Machiavelli dealing most thoroughly with questions of command and obedience. When considering how to go about "arming the state of Florence" (*ordinare lo stato Firenze alle armi*), Machiavelli begins by anatomizing the Florentine body politic: "considering your *stato*, one finds that it is divided into a *città*, a *contado*, and a *distretto*."[375] He continues that, as it is advisable to move slowly with "great things" (*le cose grandi*), the Florentines should begin by arming just one of these areas.[376] Given that an army is composed of "men who command and men who obey," and that "it is easier to learn how to obey than how to command," Machiavelli rules out starting in the *città* where people are used to commanding.[377] He also rejects beginning in the *distretto*. Here there are some larger communities (*nidi grossi*), such as Arezzo and Pistoia, each of which has the potential to make the "head" (*testa*) of a *provincia*.[378] And Machiavelli continues the bodily metaphor by noting that "Tuscany's humours" are such that it contains the type of subject "who knows that he is able to live independently [*vivere sopra di sé*] and no longer wants a lord [*padrone*], especially when finding himself armed and his lord disarmed."[379] This being the case, Machiavelli concludes that Florence must begin by arming the *contado* where there are communities that have learned how to obey and that "recognize no other

[375] "E considerando lo stato vostro, si truova diviso in città, contado e distretto." *Scritti politici minori*, 470.

[376] *Scritti politici minori*, 471.

[377] "Chi considera uno esercito, a dividerlo grossamente, lo truova composto di uomini che comandono e che ubbidiscono … E perché la vostra città e voi avete ad essere quelli che militiate a cavallo e comandiate, non si poteva cominciare da voi." *Scritti politici minori*, 471. Machiavelli also takes into account that the city is more suited to levying cavalry than infantry and one should begin by organizing the latter.

[378] "Massime in quelli luoghi del distretto dove sieno nidi grossi, dove una provincia possa fare testa." *Scritti politici minori*, 471.

[379] "Li umori di Toscana sono tali che, come uno conoscessi potere vivere sopra di sé, non vorrebbe piú padrone, trovandosi massime lui armato e il padrone disarmato." *Scritti politici minori*, 471.

lord [*padrone*] than Florence;" in fact, there is no place other than Florence for them to make their "head" (*testa*).[380]

Machiavelli thus distinguishes between different classes of subject in the *dominium* according to a capacity to assert independence from Florence. Such a capacity clearly depends on material conditions, such as a subject community's size and strength (*nidi grossi* are dangerous), and, presumably, its proximity to the imperial centre (communities in the *contado* are so close to Florence that there is no other state which can serve as their *testa*). But it also depends on what we might call its psychological profile: securing imperial obedience involves teaching subjects how to obey and in such a way that they recognize only a single lord. The process of inuring people to their subjection plays out over time; Machiavelli is willing to leave open the option of arming parts of the *distretto* after the militia recruited from the *contado* has come to be "respected" (*sieno stimate*) as a military force.[381] The implication is that once Florence's military capability has been improved by arming the *contado*, it will be in a position to force the communities of the *distretto* to learn how to obey. We shall see that this concern to sequence the construction of imperial relationships will persist in Machiavelli's theory of empire, a theory whose temporal dimension must count as one of its most distinctive features.

II. IL PRINCIPE: THE IMPERIAL PROCESS

[380] "Perché non riconoscono altro padrone che Firenze … *tamen* non hanno dove fare testa se non a Firenze." *Scritti politici minori*, 471–72.

[381] *Scritti politici minori*, 471. Machiavelli would in fact later recruit cavalry from the Valdichiana.

I now turn to examine Machiavelli's attempts in *Il Principe*, his first major work of political thought, to address some of the problems concerned with conceptualizing imperial spaces and relationships that we encountered in his governmental writings. As Peter Stacey has argued, "in *Il Principe*, Machiavelli broaches a new theory of the state which forms the backbone of all his subsequent political thinking."[382] Machiavelli presents the elements of this new theory in the opening chapter of *Il Principe*, a text which he originally entitled *De principatibus* (*On Principalities*). The work begins with a definition of states: "All the states, all the dominions that have had and have *imperio* over men, have been and are either republics or principalities."[383] We must immediately observe that *imperio* is the defining property of Machiavelli's conception of the state here; it is something the state has, and it has it over humans. Machiavelli's focus in *Il Principe* is of course on the princely state—which is not to say, however, that he ever really lets its antonym the republic stray far out of sight—and he spends the remainder of this chapter imposing an order on his text's subject matter. He does so by making, for good rhetorical reasons,[384] five binary distinctions, the first three of which help him define some different species of the princely state. Principalities, Machiavelli tells us, are either hereditary or they are new, and he dispenses relatively swiftly with the hereditary principality in chapter two. New princely states, the object of his attention in chapters three to eleven of *Il Principe*, are divided

[382] Stacey, "Free and Unfree States," 177.

[383] "Tutti gli stati, tutti e' dominii che hanno avuto e hanno imperio sopra gli uomini, sono stati e sono o republiche o principati." Niccoló Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, ed. Giorgio Inglese (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), 1, p. 7. (Hereafter *Il Principe.*) My translations of *Il Principe* are guided by, but substantially revise, Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[384] On the rhetorical features of Machiavelli's "literary style," see Peter Stacey, "Definition, Division, and Difference in Machiavelli's Political Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75.2 (2014): 189–212.

into those that are "completely new" and those that are like "limbs added to the hereditary state."[385] The third and final division of the princely state that Machiavelli makes here, which applies only to new principalities, concerns the form which the state took prior to its acquisition and transformation into a new state: "dominions acquired like this are accustomed to living under a prince or used to being free."[386]

I confine my analysis below to chapters three to five of *Il Principe*, as, although he has more to say about inter-state relations later in the text, it is here that Machiavelli explicitly theorizes the process by which a prince already in possession of a state can acquire and then hold on to another state; a process which, as we have just seen, he encourages us to understand as the addition of a limb to a body. In truth, Machiavelli thinks that *any* kind of state-building project is inherently an imperial project, since, by definition, it consists in the creation of an entity that has *imperio* over a group of humans. But by concentrating on Machiavelli's account of the acquisition of limb-like states—which, importantly, takes into consideration their previous status as either free or unfree states—I shall try to elucidate his thoughts on what we would call 'imperialism.'

We need to clarify how Machiavelli answers some very basic questions about what happens to states when they come into contact with one another. Above all, I want to explore how the treatment which imperial issues receives in *Il Principe* bears on Machiavelli's "political ontology," which, as Stacey has shown, conceptualizes the state as a "mixed body" (*corpo*

[385] "E' nuovi, o e' sono nuovi tutti … o sono come membri aggiunti allo stato ereditario del principe che gli acquista." *Il Principe* 1, p. 7.

[386] "Dominii cosí acquistati o consueti a vivere sotto uno principe o usi a essere liberi." *Il Principe* 1, p. 7.

misto).[387] Machiavelli lays out a political theory in *Il Principe* that does not seek to isolate the state in order to anaylse it; the theory in fact continually requires us to consider the state in relation to other states. This being the case, Machiavelli's state is a mixed body in more than one sense: it is composed of diverse local elements, but these elements themselves can be affected when states interact and combine with one another. It is these transformative admixtures of states that I now want to begin to examine.

The first thing to say about the imperial process that Machiavelli lays out in chapters three to five of *Il Principe* is that it is one which progresses through time. In chapter three, entitled *De principatibus mixtis*, Machiavelli turns to discuss the species of princely state that "is not completely new, but like a limb." He explains that when this limb-like state is combined with the old princely state it will form a component of a new political entity which "can be called almost mixed."[388] As Machiavelli surveys this imperial landscape, his gaze thus moves between the old princely state, the state which the prince is seeking to acquire and hold, and the partially new, composite state which their merger will create. Machiavelli explains that the ease of the imperial process fundamentally depends on geographical and cultural factors: "these states, which after they are acquired are added to the old state of that [thing] which acquires, are either in the same province, with the same language, or they are not."[389] The choice of language here seems obfuscating: who or what is doing the acquiring? As his two major examples—the King of

[387] Stacey, "Free and Unfree States," 190–94.

[388] "Se non è tutto nuovo, ma come membro: che si può chiamare tutto insieme quasi misto." *Il Principe* 3, p. 10.

[389] "Questi stati, quali acquistandosi si aggiungono a uno stato antico di quello che acquista, o e' sono della medisma provincia e della medisma lingua, o non sono." *Il Principe* 3, p. 12.

France and the Roman people—demonstrate, the answer is not only the ruler of a princely state, but also the rulers of a republic, that is the people. Machiavelli continues that states which are in the same physical and linguistic, or broadly cultural, space as the old state, providing that they are not used to "living freely" (*vivere liberi*), can be acquired and then held relatively easily. His example is the consolidation of the Kingdom of France, which entailed the forging together of a number of pre-existing princely states, such as Burgundy, Brittany, Gascony, and Normandy. When this process plays out within a single *provincia*, if the limb-like state's old princely regime is wiped out and its previous legal and fiscal structures are left in place, then it "very quickly becomes with the old princely state all one body [*tutto uno corpo*]."[390] That is to say, what were two discrete political entities have now become one. Machiavelli indicates that the imperial process that he is beginning to theorize is not only about the acquisition and retention of states, but ultimately their incorporation into new bodies.

Conversely, holding on to states that are acquired in a *provincia* which does not share the language, customs, and basic political structures (*ordini*) of the old state is a much taller order and requires both very good luck (*gran fortuna*) and a lot of hard work (*grande industria*).[391] Machiavelli offers several "remedies" that a prince can employ when he enters such a *provincia disforme*. The first involves the prince travelling to the foreign province and living in the newly acquired state, providing the example of the Ottoman sultan's direct rule of Greece from Constantinople. This remedy would appear to be available only to princes and not to republics,

[390] "E chi le acquista, volendole tenere, debbe avere dua respetti: l'uno, che el sangue del loro principe antico si spenga; l'altro, di non alterare né loro legge né loro dazi: talmente che in brevissimo tempo diventa con il loro principato antiquo tutto uno corpo." *Il Principe* 3, p. 13.

[391] *Il Principe* 3, p. 13.

although Machiavelli's reference to the "*persona*" who acquires is somewhat cryptic.[392] Another remedy prescribed by Machiavelli, the details of which he fleshes out in the *Discorsi*,[393] is to send out colonies to the *provincia*, which will act like "fetters" (*compedes*) on the state that the imperial power is seeking to establish a lasting hold over.[394] But the piece of advice that I want to focus on here, and the one to which Machiavelli devotes most of his attention in this chapter, concerns an imperial power making itself the "head and defender" (*capo e defensore*) of "smaller powers" (*minori potenti*).

Machiavelli urges that "anyone who is in a *provincia disforme* … should make himself head and defender of the smaller powers nearby and try to weaken the [stronger] powers."[395] He notes that one can expect to find in such a province "malcontents" (*malcontenti*) who, because of their "ambition" (*ambizione*) or "fear" (*paura*), will offer the invading power their support.[396] This is normally the case, Machiavelli explains, as these weaker groups in the province will tend to resent whoever currently holds power over them.[397] Machiavelli repeatedly articulates a

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[392] "E uno de' maggiori remedi e piú vivi sarebbe che la persona di chi acquista vi andassi ad abitare." *Il Principe* 3, p. 13.

[393] See especially *Discorsi* 2.6–7.

[394] "L'altro migliore remedio è mandare colonie in uno o in due luoghi, che sieno quasi compedes di quello stato." *Il Principe* 3, p. 14.

[395] "Chi è in una provincia disforme … farsi capo e defensore de' vicini minori potenti, e ingegnarsi di indebolire e' potenti di quella." *Il Principe* 3, p. 16.

[396] "E sempre interverrà ch'e' vi sarà messo da coloro che saranno in quella malcontenti o per troppa ambizione o per paura." *Il Principe* 3, p. 16.

[397] "E l'ordine delle cose è che, subito che uno forestieri potente entra in una provincia, tutti quelli che sono in essa meno potenti gli aderiscano, mossi da una invidia hanno contro a chi è suto potente sopra di loro." *Il Principe* 3, p. 16. Russell Price's English translation is misleading at this point, as he twice translates "minori potenti" in this passage as "less powerful men," commenting in a footnote that these men are "those who have *some* influence or power, not the masses." Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Skinner and Price, 10 with n. b. But

language of power politics in this passage to describe what is a rather fluid situation. It seems he wants to show us that the genesis of a new state in a *provincia disforme* involves a shift in power from one agent, or group of agents, to another. Once a foreign power enters into a province and seeks to set itself up as *capo e defensore*, it triggers a process which places that *provincia*, and the *stati* within it, into a liminal state. As Machiavelli makes clear, it should be a fairly straightforward matter for the invader to take full advantage of this geopolitical instability, co-opting the minor powers in his campaign against the major ones: "he will not have to work hard in gaining them, since they will all immediately want to make *uno globo* with the *stato* he has acquired there."[398] Providing that he does not allow the minor powers to acquire too much force (*forze*) and authority (*autorità*), with his own forces and their consent he can eliminate the major powers and, as such, be left "in all respects the arbiter [*arbitro*] of that province."[399]

The historical example Machiavelli supplies at this moment is instructive: Roman foreign policy in Greece in the early second century BCE. The Romans, according to Machiavelli, were initially able to insert themselves into the *provincia* by establishing friendly relations with the Achaeans and Aetolians. By doing so, they positioned themselves as *capo e defensore* and thereby supplanted in the region the major powers of Philip V of Macedon and the Seleucid

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Machiavelli is referring to less powerful *peoples*, taken in a collective sense, as his example of the Aetolians bears out. Whether these peoples should still be understood as forming *stati*, is, however, another question.

[398] "Respetto a questi minori potenti, lui non ha a durare fatica alcuna guadagnargli, perché subito tutti insieme volentieri fanno uno globo col suo stato che lui vi ha acquistato." *Il Principe* 3, p. 16.

[399] "Ha solamente a pensare che non piglino troppe forze e troppa autorità, e facilmente può con le forze rimanere in tutto arbitro di quella provincia." *Il Principe* 3, pp. 16–17.

Antiochus III.[400] What is more, the Romans were careful to monopolize their new power in Greece: they did not permit their Greek supporters "to grow any kind of state" (*accrescere alcuno stato*), they rebuffed Philip's advances of friendship, and they refused to allow Antiochus to hold any "*stato*" in the *provincia*.[401] In other words, Machiavelli presents the Romans' policy as being exemplary insofar as it secured for them, and for them alone, the position of power required to create in a *provincia disforme* a new state. As I tried to show in Chapter One, this episode of Roman history has a particularly important place in the development of both classical and Renaissance humanist accounts of the Roman Republic's imperial mission. For Machiavelli, Rome's Grecian strategy illustrates how an imperial power should seek to establish itself as *capo e defensore* of weaker powers. But this is not an indication that he is now following his humanist predecessors and redeploying in his more mature political thought the concept of the protectorate which he had rejected earlier in the *Discorso sopra Pisa*. We have to consider the status of those powers, which constitute groups or bodies of people, that Machiavelli thinks will become *uno globo* with the imperial power's new *stato*.

After he had declared their liberation in 196 BCE, Livy's Flamininus views the Greeks as free peoples living, under the protection of Roman *patrocinium*, in free *civitates*.[402] And we have

[400] "E voglio mi basti solo la provincia di Grecia per esemplo: furno intrattenuti da loro gli achei e gli, fu abbassato il regno de' macedoni, funne cacciato Antioco." *Il Principe* 3, p. 17.

[401] "Né mai e' meriti degli achei o delli etoli feciono ch'e' permetessino loro accrescere alcuno, né le persuasioni di Filippo gl'indussono mai a essergli amici sanza sbassarlo, né la potenza di Antioco possé fare gli consentissino che tenessi in quella provincia alcuno stato." *Il Principe* 3, p. 17.

[402] After Rome's defeat of Philip, Flamininus's declaration of Greek liberty names groups of people—e.g. "Corinthios"—and orders them to be "liberos, immunes, suis legibus." Livy 33.32.5. And Flaminus speaks of "civitates" when promising that the Roman people will vindicate Greek liberty against Antiochus. Livy 34.59.4–6.

seen that Florentine humanists such as Salutati and Bruni exploited this patronal model of empire to suggest that communities in the Florentine *dominium* continued to enjoy a free status. But Machiavelli notes in this chapter that enacting the set of policies he associates with an imperial power making itself *capo e defensore* should result in that power becoming the undisputed "arbiter" of a province, a phrase which does not exactly ring with freedom. More obviously, and fundamentally, Machiavelli is above all concerned here with explaining the strategies with which an invader can acquire and maintain power in a province; strategies which, as we have seen, he readily admits involve weakening other powers and stunting the growth of their *stati*. As he declares in no uncertain terms, "it is very natural and normal to want to acquire things";[403] a statement that, as we shall see when we come to the *Discorsi*, serves as the guiding principle of his theory of empire. This desire led both the Romans and the King of France to enter foreign provinces and attempt to establish new states. Yet the contrast Machiavelli makes here between the imperial republic and the imperial monarch, embodied respectively by the Romans in Greece and Louis XII of France in Italy, could not be more striking: while Rome succeeded triumphantly in a *provincia disforme*, Louis' failure was abject. Although here the French king's Italian adventure is presented as a series of strategic errors, in the *Discorsi* Machiavelli will account for why republics are in fact hard-wired to be more effective imperial powers than princes.

We still need to clarify Machiavelli's answer to the question posed earlier: what happens to the status of those peoples who are to be added on to or incorporated within the imperial power's *stato*? Although Machiavelli noted that a province's minor powers will willingly make *uno globo* with the invader's new *stato*, we must recognize that at this point we are still in the

[403] "È cosa veramente molto naturale e ordinaria desiderare di acquistare." *Il Principe* 3, p. 22.

first phase of the process of imperial state formation. Minor powers like the Aetolians and Achaeans will initially want to band together with a foreign invader such as Rome, but once that invader has asserted its power in the province, there is good reason to think that the *globo* it has formed will be at risk of decomposing. Indeed, why would the minor powers continue to support the invader's *stato* if they are not given the opportunity to begin to grow their own power and *stati*? It is telling that in these passages Machiavelli never refers to the Greeks as being in possession of *stati*; in fact, he notes that the Romans *did not* permit the Aetolians and Achaeans "to grow any state." It seems, then, that before the Romans entered the province the Greeks had been deprived of their states by Philip V, but Rome did not champion the return of their statehood; quite the opposite. Machiavelli is continuing his departure from the classical and humanist authorities who wanted to argue that the imperial process is able to free the enslaved, or, at the very least, keep intact the political entities which subject peoples belong to.

Following on from his more general and introductory observations in chapter three about limb-like states viewed from a bird's eye, provincial level, Machiavelli's concern in chapters four and five is to descend to the level of the state. He wants to explain how the differing ways in which individual states are constituted, which he calls the "*disformità del subietto*," effect how an imperial power should approach acquiring and holding on to them. Although from chapter four's title—"Why Darius's kingdom, which Alexander conquered, did not rebel against Alexander's successors after his death"[404]—it may appear that Machiavelli is pausing his general discussion of the acquisition and retention of limb-like states to examine one particular case

[404] "Cur Darii regnum, quod Alexander occupaverat, a successoribus suis post Alexandri mortem non defecit." *Il Principe* 4, p. 24.

study, namely Alexander the Great's acquisition and his successors' retention of the *stato* of Asia, he is in fact continuing to refine his emerging theory of empire. In this chapter Machiavelli restricts his view to the *disformità* found among princely states, which he begins to explain by dividing them into two types according to how they are governed. In one version of the princely state, exemplified by the Ottoman monarchy, the prince governs through "minsters" who depend entirely on him for their position and are hence his "slaves."[405] In the other version, represented by the Kingdom of France, the prince governs alongside "barons" who owe their "rank," not to the prince, but to their noble lineage.[406] In fact, Machiavelli goes as far as saying that these *baroni* have "their own *stati* and their own subjects."[407]

Machiavelli proceeds to lay out a theory of how an imperial power can acquire and hold principalities that embraces this distinction between the two kinds of governmental hierarchy found within princely states. Principalities like Turkey are more difficult to acquire but easier to hold, whereas the opposite applies to those like France. On the one hand, princes like the Ottoman sultan are the masters of their dependent and enslaved governors and therefore rule unified states which are more resistant to forcible acquisition. However, if an invader is successful in conquering this type of principality, it will hold a monopoly of power over the state. On the other hand, princes like the King of France are not the masters of the *baroni* with

[405] Price's translation takes the edge off Machiavelli's point: Machiavelli uses "servi" twice and "stiavi" once in this chapter but Price renders all as "servants." Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Skinner and Price, 15–17.

[406] "E' principati de' quali si ha memoria si truovono governati in dua modi diversi: o per uno principe e tutti li altri servi, e' quali come ministri, per grazia e concessione sua, auitano governare quello regno; o per uno principe e per baroni e' quali non per grazia del signore, ma per antichità di sangue, tengono quel grado." *Il Principe* 4, p. 25.

[407] "Questi tali baroni hanno stati e sudditi propri." *Il Principe* 4, p. 25

whom they govern and, as such, their states are disunited and more susceptible to foreign invasion. Indeed, if we take Machiavelli literally, they are disunited to the point of being fractured into a number of baronial microstates; states within the princely state.[408] This being so, an invader who acquires this kind of principality will share power with the *baroni* and hence acquires a disunited state, prone to rebellion.

Machiavelli's thinking here is, as ever, complex and dense. If we probe more deeply his reasons for attributing these different characteristics to the two types of princely state which he posits, then we will see that they rely on a psychology of command and obedience. The prince who rules through enslaved governors has more "*autorità*" than the prince who shares power with *baroni* since none of the former's subjects "recognize anyone as being superior to him." When a subject obeys one of this prince's ministers, he does so not because he has any love for that minister, but because he understands him to be a functionary of the prince, the sole object of his obedience.[409] The ministers' dependency on their prince makes it effectively impossible for an invading power to corrupt them and win their backing for regime change. But even if it were possible, there would be little to gain since these ministers do not command the people's obedience.[410] Conversely, the prince who governs alongside *baroni* does not enjoy the absolute

[408] From this perspective, Norbert Elias's account of the French state's long gestation in the Middle Ages comes to look arrestingly Machiavellian: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 2, *State Formation and Civilization*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) [originally published Basel, 1939].

[409] "Quelli stati che si governano per uno principe e per servi hanno el loro principe con piú autorità, perché in tutta la sua provincia non è uomo che riconosca alcuno per superiore se non lui; e se ubbidiscono alcuno altro, lo fanno come ministro e offiziale; e a lui portano particulare amore." *Il Principe* 4, p. 25.

[410] "Sendogli tutti stiavi e obligati, si possono con piú difficultà corrompere e, quando bene si corrompessino, se ne può sperare poco utile, non potendo quelli tirarsi dreto e' populi." *Il Principe* 4, p. 26. Machiavelli also notes that this type of princely government is one in which only the prince has "credito" with the people.

obedience of the subjects in his *stato*. The *baroni* are "recognized" by their subjects as "*signori*" in their own right and held by them in a "natural affection," which Machiavelli is prepared to call love.[411] This being so, the foreign power that enters such a principality, it must follow, will only with great difficulty be able to transfer these subjects' obedience from the baronial *signori* to itself. It seems, then, that creating a new state is in a fundamental way about establishing in subjects' minds the *recognition* of a commanding lordship.

As in chapter three, Machiavelli selects as his examples of princely states the Ottoman and French monarchies. But he does not present a crude thesis of oriental despotism. Although he suggests that the Ottoman sultan's satraps are his slaves, whereas the French *baroni* have some degree of independence from their king, Machiavelli gives no indication whatsoever that the subjects at large in either type of princely state are living in a state of liberty. As Stacey continues to demonstrate, Machiavelli is remarkably consistent in his conceptualization of the princely state as an unfree body.[412] However, when we consider the type of state represented by the Kingdom of France, we are faced with a rather awkward picture of baronial quasi-states within the princely state. Again, I want to suggest that Machiavelli's understanding of the development of states as a phased process must be borne in mind if we are to make some sense of his thinking about empire. We need to approach the thing that we are calling the 'Kingdom of France' as an entity still undergoing a process of state formation. Although the French king certainly has a *stato*, he is also, as Machiavelli says, "in the midst of numerous ancient *signori*,"

[411] "Gli riconoscono per signori e hanno in loro naturale affezione … riconosciuti da' loro sudditi e amati da quegli." *Il Principe* 4, pp. 25–26.

[412] Stacey has forthcoming work on this subject. See for now Stacey, "Free and Unfree States," 185.

who have their own *stati* and loving subjects, and thus he cannot be understood to command the absolute obedience of every person living in his kingdom.[413] As we saw in chapter three of *Il Principe*, Machiavelli views the territory of France as one which has been historically subjected to an imperial process, as a number of *stati* were brought together into one. But in this chapter Machiavelli suggests that the King of France's attempts to impose his authority over this territory and the baronial 'states' within it are still ongoing. Until such time as the ties of obedience of all 'French' subjects have been transferred from the many *baroni* to a single prince, the *stato* of France remains a fictional entity; what we have in reality is a number of semi-independent *signori*, with their own subjects and their own quasi-states. The point I want to stress is that, even if these *baroni* are free with respect to the King of France, the states which they dominate and the subjects within them certainly are not: a number of old unfree states are in the process of being absorbed into the body of a new unfree state. In this sense, the Ottoman sultan is simply the type of prince that the King of France will become if he succeeds in fully incorporating his limb-like states into a new composite body.

Whether a princely state is governed in the Ottoman or French mode, there will be no change to its status if it is acquired by another prince, as any state held by a prince is for Machiavelli by definition unfree. But what does Machiavelli think happens to a princely state that is acquired by a republic? Could he, by falling into line with the Roman Republican and humanist tradition of imperial thinking that we have been examining, possibly conceive of such an acquisition as an act of liberation? Although he is focused in chapter four on the acquisition of

[413] "Ma il re di Francia è posto in mezzo di una moltitudine antiquata di signori." *Il Principe* 4, p. 26.

principalities by a monarchical figure, Machiavelli does offer some brief remarks about how the Romans faired in Spain, Gaul, and Greece; *stati*, he tells us, in which they often encountered principalities. These three ancient states resemble modern France in that, on closer inspection, each actually constitutes a multiplicity of states. Machiavelli says nothing about a Roman mission to liberate Spanish, Gaulish, or even Greek peoples from the hands of princes. Instead, he simply observes that it was not until the "memory" of these principalities had faded and Rome's own "power" and "*imperio*" had been long established that the Romans became "secure possessors."[414] Machiavelli again requires us to understand this process as progressing over time; it takes time for subjects to forget about the old foci of their obedience and be made to redirect it towards new ones. The Roman example is useful as it demonstrates how to vaporize pre-existing structures of command and obedience by eliminating the old *signori* and waiting for the memory of their states to vanish. In such a way Spain, Gaul, and Greece all came to resemble the *stato* of Asia in the time of Darius and Alexander, that is each was unified under a single power. Perhaps with some irony, Machiavelli suggests that it was the very success of the Roman Republic's imperial policies in these provinces which would later make them such tempting sources of unmediated power for men like Pompey and Caesar, the destroyers of the Roman free state.[415]

There is, I think, a crucial point embedded in this discussion. Machiavelli seems to suggest that once a foreign power has unequivocally secured its *imperio* over a subject state, then

[414] "Ma gli stati ordinati come quello di Francia è impossibile possederli con tanta quiete. Di qui nacquono le spesse ribellioni di Spagna, di Francia e di Grecia da' romani, per gli spessi principati che erano in quelli stati: de' quali mentre durò la memoria, sempre fu Roma incerta di quella possessione. Ma spenta la memoria di quelli, con la potenza e diuturnità dello imperio, ne diventorno sicuri possessori." *Il Principe* 4, p. 28.

[415] "E poterno anche quelli di poi, combattendo in fra loro, ciascuno tirarsi dreto parte di quelle provincie secondo l'autorità vi aveva presa dentro; e quelle, per essere e' sangui de' loro antiqui signori spenti, non riconoscevano se non e' romani." *Il Principe* 4, pp. 28–29.

that state loses its statehood and becomes absorbed into the imperializing state's body. In the sentence just quoted, Machiavelli calls Spain, France, and Greece "*stati*" when he is talking about their rebellions against Rome, but when the Romans had become "*sicuri possessori*," the language of the state disappears. In fact, Machiavelli does not specify what it is that the Romans possess; all we are told is that the former *stati* have become Roman "*provincie*," which will be exploited by private individuals during the civil wars. It seems, then, that subject states in some way retain their statehood up to the point at which the imperializing state has completely broken and remade the old ties of command and obedience.

Machiavelli concludes the chapter by underlining once again that the imperial process is necessarily conditioned by the characteristics of the state which the imperializing power has in its sights. To understand why Alexander had a relatively easy time retaining his *stato* in Asia, whereas Pyrrhus struggled to hold on to what he acquired, we need not consider, Machiavelli tells us, the princes' respective "*virtù*," so much as the "*disformità del subietto*," that is the differing types of state that each prince was attempting to acquire. This is the first time that Machiavelli mentions Pyrrhus and it seems he does so at the close of this chapter in order to bridge to the topic of the next. Whereas Alexander's imperial target of Asia was a princely state, in confronting the Romans Pyrrhus was attempting to subject a republic.[416] We shall now see that this most basic "*disformità*" in the "*subietto*" that is the state—its free or unfree status—has profound implications for Machiavelli's imperial thinking.

[416] It is also possible that Pyrrhus serves as a transitional example for Machiavelli as a ruler who tried to acquire and hold on to both princely (i.e. in Greece) and republican states (i.e. in Italy).

III. IL PRINCIPE: SUBJECTING THE REPUBLIC

While in chapter four Machiavelli had been concerned exclusively with the acquisition and retention of the princely version of the limb-like state, in chapter five he is almost entirely devoted to analysing the means by which an imperial power can hold a republic. In the chapter's opening sentence, Machiavelli signals that his discussion will be concerned with "*stati*" which "are accustomed to living under their own laws and in freedom."[417] He is reminding us here of the third binary distinction which he had made in chapter one when defining the different species of the princely state: "dominions acquired like this [i.e. new principalities] are accustomed to living under a prince or used to being free."[418] As Russell Price notes, "only the penultimate sentence of the chapter is concerned with principalities," and he is certainly correct that it is the retention of republics that is Machiavelli's overriding interest here. But it is not quite right for Price to say that Machiavelli makes this one reference to principalities in order "to emphasise the contrast with 'independent republics.'"[419] I want to argue that Machiavelli categorically rules out the notion of a dependent republic; republics are defined by their freedom and therefore a free state which becomes dependent on another state, even when that state is itself a republic, can no longer be understood as such. What, then, does it become?

Machiavelli pronounces that there are three ways in which an imperial power can hold on to a republic that it has acquired: it can ruin it, it can go to live there, or it can leave it "living

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[417] "Quelli stati, che si acquistano come è detto, sono consueti a vivere con le loro leggi e in libertà." *Il Principe* 5, p. 29.

[418] "Dominii cosí acquistati o consueti a vivere sotto uno principe o usi a essere liberi." *Il Principe* 1, p. 7.

[419] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Skinner and Price, 109 with n. *a*.

under its own laws," extracting tribute from it and creating within it an "oligarchic state" (*stato di pochi*).[420] It is important to note right away that Machiavelli does not present as a possible scenario here the preservation of a republic's free status. The final policy option appears the least heavy-handed of the three, but even here freedom is absent: a state which had been accustomed to living under its own laws *and* in freedom is left simply living under its own laws. It seems therefore that Machiavelli theorizes a situation in which a state can enjoys a continuity of its laws without a continuity of its free status. This policy is designed to keep the state "friendly" (*amiche*) towards the imperial power, but Machiavelli's is an idiosyncratic vision of inter-state friendship. The *stato di pochi* which the imperial power conjures from the target state's own citizens will be utterly dependent on its creator's "*amicizia*" and "*potenza*" for its continued existence, thus rendering it totally compliant.[421] This is, then, an imperial strategy which involves cultivating the growth of a kind of "*stato*"—in the sense of a particular "constitutional form"[422]—within a state. By doing so, the imperial power is able to establish a bond of friendship which runs between itself and the republic via the medium of the *stato di pochi*. We should note that the friendship which binds the *stato di pochi* to the imperial power, and which in turn binds the republic to it as well, is an entirely unequal one of dependency.

If Machiavelli is addressing in this chapter the prince alone, then the absence of freedom

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[420] "Il primo, ruinarle; l'altro, andarvi ad abitare personalmente; il terzo, lasciàgli vivere con le sua legge, traendone una pensione e creandovi dentro uno stato di pochi, che te lo conservino amico." *Il Principe* 5, p. 29.

[421] "Perché, sendo quello stato creato da quello principe, sa che non può stare sanza l'amicizia e potenza sua e ha a fare tutto per mantenerlo; e più facilmente si tiene una città usa a vivere libera con il mezzo de' sua cittadini che in alcuno altro modo, volendola perservare." *Il Principe* 5, pp. 29–30.

[422] Price, translates "stato" here as "government," but Machiavelli seems to mean the type of constitution that a state has in place. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Skinner and Price, 18.

in his discussion so far of the imperial subjection of republics is to be expected. Once again, Machiavelli thinks that all states held by princes are unfree, so whenever a republic comes into the prince's grasp, even if he allows it to retain its previous laws, it automatically loses its free status. And Machiavelli does use the term "*principe*" when he is outlining the method of holding a republic with a *stato di pochi*. It is striking therefore that his three examples of imperial powers attempting to hold on to republican states—Sparta, Rome, and Florence—are all themselves republics.

Machiavelli proceeds to exemplify two of the three policy options which he has laid out, omitting the method of moving to a republic and living there, probably because this policy is effectively the same as the direct rule of a state in a *provincia disforme* discussed in chapter three. The contrast which he wants to draw here is between the imperial policies of creating a *stato di pochi* within a republic and literally "unmaking" or "undoing" (*disfare*) it. Machiavelli notes somewhat paradoxically that the Romans "unmade" Capua, Carthage, and Numantia and thus did not lose them.[423] He had spoken of "ruining" (*ruinare*) republics when he initially listed the three policy options at the beginning of the chapter, but Machiavelli now uses the verb *disfare*. Quite what it means to "unmake" or "undo" a republic will be worth considering in some detail when we come to the *Discorsi*, but we should notice the examples Machiavelli chooses here of republics that the Romans "unmade." While Carthage and Numantia were both razed to the ground and thus became proverbial instances of the physical annihilation of a political community, the Romans, according to Livy, decided in 211 BCE to preserve Capua as an "*urbs*," even though they executed a number of its senators, sold some of its inhabitants into slavery, and

[423] "E' romani, per tenere Capua Cartagine e Numanzia, le disfeciono, e non le perderno." *Il Principe*, 5, p. 30.

dissolved its "*corpus civitatis*."[424] We might conclude that, for Machiavelli, it is a republic's status as a civic body, rather than its bricks-and-mortar physicality as an *urbs*, which counts when we are considering its preservation or destruction. But we should also note that, unlike Cicero, Salutati, and Bruni, Machiavelli does not define the state as an association bound by law, but rather as a body under *imperio*.

Turning to the policy of creating a *stato di pochi* in a republic, Machiavelli is once again drawn to the ancient Greek world for the practical examples with which he seeks to illustrate and corroborate his theory. He notes that the Spartans attempted to hold Athens and Thebes by creating a *stato di pochi* in each republic, but the policy ultimately failed and the Spartans lost their grip on these states.[425] The Romans, Machiavelli continues, "wanted to hold Greece almost like the Spartans had, making it free and leaving the Greeks under their own laws." However, the policy again proved unsuccessful and the Romans were forced to "unmake" many cities in the *provincia* in order to hold them. [426] Machiavelli again highlights the counterintuitive nature of this piece of his imperial theory, which is borne out here by his choice of historical examples: "in truth, there is no surer way of possessing *città* [i.e. republican states] than ruining them."[427] Machiavelli has again transported us to the second century BCE to observe the Roman Republic's Grecian settlement. Unlike Salutati in his *Contra maledicum*, Machiavelli does not

[424] Livy 26.16. See also Livy 26.33–34 for Rome revising some aspects of the Campanians' punishment.

[425] "Gli spartani tennono Atene e Tebe creandovi uno stato di pochi, tamen le riperderno." *Il Principe* 5, p. 30.

[426] "E' romani … vollono tenere la Grecia quasi come tennono gli spartani, faccendola libera e lasciandole le sua legge, e non successe loro: tale che furno constretti disfare di molte città di quella provincia per tenerla." *Il Principe* 5, p. 30.

[427] "In verità non ci è modo sicuro a possederle altro che la ruina." *Il Principe* 5, p. 30.

point to Flamininus's declaration of Greek liberty as an instance of right-minded imperial benevolence. Greece's experience after 196 BCE is important for Machiavelli insofar as it provides a negative example: just fifty years after the Greeks were pronounced free, the Romans found themselves in 146 BCE fighting the Achaean War and, at its close, burning Corinth to the ground. The question is, then, if the Greeks had been set free, why were they not content with their liberty? Machiavelli now comments:

> He who becomes patron [*patrone*] of a city used to living freely and does not destroy it can expect to be destroyed by it, because it will always have as a refuge in rebellion the name of liberty and its ancient institutions, which never through either length of time or benefits are forgotten.[428]

The conclusion it seems we must draw is that Greece was not in fact free under Rome. It is highly unlikely that Machiavelli's choice of explicitly patronal language here is not carefully calculated; he speaks of "patrons" twice in chapter twelve to refer to the employers of mercenaries, but the term appears nowhere else in *Il Principe*.[429] It seems clear that Machiavelli is reappraising here the concept of *patrocinium* in light of the Roman Republic's historical record in Greece, the imperial theatre in which the patronal model was most conspicuously exhibited. Machiavelli does not indicate whether he thinks the Romans' desire to liberate Greece was sincere or not, but this is perhaps beside the point; the Greeks knew they were not free, and, despite any benefits they may have received from their patrons, it was this fact which made them

[428] "Chi diviene patrone di una città consueta a vivere libera, e non la disfaccia, aspetti di essere disfatto da quella: perché sempre ha per refugio nella rebellione el nome della libertà e gli ordini antiqui sua, e' li quali né per lunghezza di tempo né per benefizi mai si dimenticano." *Il Principe* 5, pp. 30–31.

[429] *Il Principe* 12, pp. 81 and 83.

implacable to Roman rule. Unpicking the logic of the patronal model of empire, Machiavelli thus highlights the contradiction between a state's liberty and its subjection to a foreign power. He then further encourages us towards the conclusion that an imperial actor cannot both hold on to a state and uphold its freedom when he describes Pisa's experience under the Florentines as a hundred years of "servitude."[430]

Machiavelli sharpens the image he has been presenting of the unruly republic under *imperio* by contrasting it to the subjected principality. He observes that "cities or provinces that are used to living under a prince … are used to obeying … and do not know free living [*vivere liberi*]." This being the case, if his advice in chapter three is carried out and the principality's old dynasty is eliminated, then it is a relatively easy matter for the imperial power to transfer to itself the old ties of obedience.[431] However, Machiavelli affirms that in republics the memory of liberty endures and thus there is "greater vitality, more hatred, and a stronger desire for revenge."[432] Republics, then, are healthier, more passionate, more recalcitrant bodies than principalities and imperial powers must adapt their policies accordingly. Machiavelli thus concludes the chapter by declaring that "the surest method is to extinguish them [*spegnerle*] or to live there."[433]

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[430] "Come fe' Pisa dopo cento anni che la era suta posta in servitú da' fiorentini." *Il Principe* 5, p. 31.

[431] "Quando le città o le provincie sono use a vivere sotto uno principe e quello sangue sia spento, sendo da uno canto usi a ubbidire, da l'altro non avendo Il Principe vecchio, farne uno in fra loro non si accordano, vivere liberi non sanno." *Il Principe* 5, p. 31. We should note that princely states like France which contain a number of baronial microstates will represent a tougher challenge for the imperial power, but not, it would seem, a tougher one than that presented by republics.

[432] "Nelle republiche è maggiore vita, maggiore odio, più desiderio di vendetta: né gli lascia, né può lasciare, riposare la memoria della antiqua libertà." *Il Principe* 5, p. 31.

[433] "La più sicura via è spegnerle, o abitarvi." *Il Principe* 5, p. 31.

Now that we have followed the thread of his thinking in this chapter to its end, we can see that Machiavelli has reduced from three to two the possible options of holding on to republics: the policy of creating a *stato di pochi* has been finally, and it would seem conclusively, cast aside. This procedure of presenting an option only to withdraw it—a kind of reasoning by process of elimination—is typical of Machiavelli's argumentative style, which is of course rhetorically highly refined.[434] If the option of imposing direct rule over an imperial acquisition is only available to the prince, as he alone has the ability to up sticks and move to the target state, then it appears that the imperial republic can only hold on to another republic by adopting the policy which Machiavelli variously describes as "ruining," "unmaking," and "extinguishing" a state. Does Machiavelli think, then, that Florence should have destroyed Pisa and the other former *civitates* in its *dominium*? Indeed, was doing so the only means by which Florence could have preserved its empire of former republics? If Machiavelli does indeed think this, then he leaves us with a particularly devastating picture of the imperial republic: a free state whose expansion necessitates the destruction of other free states. And it is true that Machiavelli will quote approvingly in the *Discorsi* Livy's maxim that "Rome grows on the ruins of Alba."[435]

But this is to get ahead of ourselves. Let us return to the puzzle at the heart of chapter five. If an imperial power does, unadvisedly, leave a subjected republic living under its own laws, then what happens to that republic at an existential level?[436] If we cleave to Machiavelli's

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[434] See Stacey, "Definition, Division, and Difference."

[435] "Crescit interea Roma Albae ruinis." *Discorsi* 2.3, p. 144.

[436] Clifford Ando has highlighted "the complete disarticulation in Roman thought … of sovereignty-cum-freedom-of-action in foreign affairs … from autonomy, meaning above all the right to conduct civil and criminal trials of local relevance using laws authorized by local authorities." Ando, "A Dwelling Beyond Violence," 213. It is quite possible that Machiavelli is observing and exploiting this same distinction when he

definition of the state in chapter one, then *imperio* must be the state's *sine qua non*. This being so, if one state subjects another to its *imperio* then, even if it retains the ability to make its own laws, the subjected state loses the very thing which defines its statehood. How, then, can it continue to exist *qua* state?

Again, we have to bear in mind the sequential quality of Machiavelli's imperial thinking. From the moment an imperial power first seizes another state, the body of that state begins to undergo a transformative process. As we have seen, in principalities the old bonds of command and obedience can often be undone and then retied without too much difficulty; if the circumstances are favourable, then the old trunk of the imperial state and its new princely limb will fairly quickly become "*tutto uno corpo*." But in republican states the liberty which characterizes them creates considerable forces of resistance. It may be true that when a republic is placed under the *imperio* of another state, such as Pisa under Florence, it becomes an entity which, according to the logic of Machiavelli's political theory, we can no longer call a "*stato*." And yet, to take Pisa again, the memory of liberty can somehow endure in this body and enable it to spring back as a free state, underlined by the fact that, even after a century of domination, Florence failed to absorb Pisa into its body. When we descend to this most abstract level of Machiavelli's imperial thinking, it is very difficult within the mere outlines of the theory of empire that he sketches in *Il Principe* to pin down exactly what Pisa *was* during its hundred years of Florentine servitude. It certainly was not a free state, so was it then an unfree state held by the Florentine people acting as a *principe*? As I have suggested, I think we have to conclude that it

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describes the subject state which retains legislative power, yet forfeits its liberty, and also what we would call its 'sovereignty.'

both was and was not a state. In the strictest conceptual terms, Pisa must have been an unfree body whose statehood, so long as Florence held *imperio* and *dominio* over it, had been put into a state of suspended animation.

At the stage of development that his thinking about empire had reached in c. 1513, Machiavelli does not lay out a fully-fledged theory of imperial acquisition, retention, and absorption. We must acknowledge the constraints imposed on him by the genre of his first major work of political theory. Machiavelli's interest in the imperial republic in chapters three to five of *Il Principe* is subservient to his analysis of the species of principality that he describes as "almost mixed," and to his explicit aim of advising a princely reader about how to acquire and retain this particular type of state. This being the case, his discussion of the imperial process in this text is necessarily circumscribed; the imperial prince cannot avail himself of all the methods available to the imperial republic. For instance, Machiavelli does not mention in *Il Principe* the imperial dimensions of citizenship, but we shall see that the granting of citizen status will feature prominently in the *Discorsi* as a mechanism of the republic's expansion. We must also note that, however harsh the imperial republic's policies appear to be in *Il Principe*, the imperial principality, when it sets its sights on free states, is of course also a destroyer of liberty. Since all of the prince's subjects—both new and old, former members of both principalities and of republics—are his slaves, the dialectic of liberty and empire is not so much a concern for Machiavelli in *Il Principe* as it will be in the *Discorsi*.

In fact, imperial growth is not treated at great length in *Il Principe*. We might ask why Machiavelli chooses to present his mature theory of empire in the *Discorsi* and not in *Il Principe*. Our answer will entail a consideration of why the absence of liberty in the princely state limits its

potential for growth and why it is the republic that is the more efficient imperial power of the two basic forms of the state. The three chapters of *Il Principe* that we have examined do, however, retain an important place in Machiavelli's broader imperial thinking. As we are about to see in the *Discorsi*, when the republic turns its face outwards, it shows the world the face of the prince. But as I have indicated in this chapter, Machiavelli's early imperial thinking develops in a direction that seems to lead him away from the conclusion that both the imperial prince and the imperial republic rule the foreign bodies which they acquire as unfree *states*. Machiavelli will have to find his own solution to the ancient problem of reconciling liberty with empire.

CHAPTER 4

The Discorsi *and Machiavelli's Theory of Empire*

My aim in this chapter is to extract and reassemble, in as systematic a fashion as possible, the somewhat scattered pieces of the theory of empire contained in Machiavelli's *Discorsi*. Machiavelli dedicates Book Two of the work to an analysis of the decisions "the Roman people made concerning the expansion of its *imperio*."[437] It is in this book therefore that Machiavelli scrutinizes most closely the set of conceptual and ideological issues surrounding the free state's imperial subjection of other states and peoples which I have been pursuing throughout this dissertation. Although Machiavelli is obviously prepared when treating Roman history in the *Discorsi* to range well beyond the chronological confines of Livy's first decade, the principal context in which he chooses to analyze the phenomenon of republican empire is nevertheless the phase of Roman history—importantly an Italian, rather than a transalpine and Mediterranean one—as narrated by Livy from the foundation of the city down to the end of the first decade in 292 BCE. But while Machiavelli had found it necessary to examine closely in Book One Rome's regal period, in Book Two he immediately bypasses the kings to focus his attention on the free *popolo Romano* and the expansion of its *imperio* over other free peoples inhabiting the Italian

[437] "In questo [libro] parleremo di quelle [diliberazioni], che 'l popolo romano fece pertinenti allo augumento dello imperio suo." *Discorsi* 2. *proemio*, p. 135. As in previous chapters, my translations of the *Discorsi* are adapted from Machiavelli, *The Sweetness of Power*, trans. Atkinson and Sices.

peninsula.[438] The leitmotif of Book Two of the *Discorsi* is thus what happens when liberty is pitted against liberty.

Book Two represents, then, both an extension and a development in a new direction of the analysis of imperial expansion that we saw Machiavelli laying out in chapters three to five of *Il Principe*; indeed, he will cross reference to chapter three of his "treatise on principalities" when considering in *Discorsi* 2.1 how the *popolo Romano* went about "entering into the provinces of others."[439] More specifically, Machiavelli's account in Book Two of the process of subjecting liberty to empire must in some sense be seen as a book-length elaboration of the brief fifth chapter of *Il Principe*, in which, as we saw, he considered the imperial acquisition of states "used to living under their own laws and in freedom."[440] Here he had enlisted the Romans to exemplify two imperial policies for holding formerly free states: setting up oligarchic *stati di pochi* and "unmaking" them. But, as we noted, whenever the Romans appear in *Il Principe*, Machiavelli has to tailor his remarks to the demands of the monarchical genre in which he is working. While there is no doubt that in the *Discorsi* Machiavelli continues to conceptualize the Roman people as a prince in relation to its foreign rivals and subjects, in this text he is now afforded the theoretical space to consider the ways in which a free people taken as a collective agent will make for a rather different type of imperial *principe* than a single princely figure. We

[438] In Book Two Machiavelli is particularly interested in analyzing the sequence of wars fought by the Roman people against the Samnites, Latins, and Etruscans during the fourth century BCE, and therefore keeps a closer eye on Books Five to Ten of Livy than on the opening four books.

[439] "Sarebbeci da mostrare a questo proposito il modo tenuto dal popolo nello entrare nelle provincie d'altrui, se nel nostro trattato de' principati non ne avessimo parlato a lungo." *Discorsi* 2.1, p. 138.

[440] See pp. 157–ff. above.

shall see that, in its ideal mode, the republic's imperialism is both more destructive and more creative than that of even the most virtuoso of princes.

Although Book Two of the *Discorsi* contains his most sustained examination of the problem of liberty and empire, Machiavelli finds it impossible to avoid treating at some length imperial themes in Book One, in which his explicit aim is to discuss "the decisions made by the Romans pertaining to matters inside the *città*."[441] This is the case as Machiavelli emphatically rejects in the *Discorsi*, as he had in *Il Principe*, the premise that the state should be studied in isolation; in fact, any meaningful analysis on his terms must attempt to view the state's creation, maintenance, and expansion as occurring within a world of other states. The extent to which imperial concerns shape Machiavelli's theoretical project throughout the *Discorsi* is instantly conspicuous in Book One's opening six chapters. Here Machiavelli wants to demonstrate that the foundation and early constitution of the Roman free state are ideal in large part because they enabled Rome both to resist the imperializing designs of other states and to extend its own *imperio*. In what follows I will therefore need to shuttle between the *Discorsi*'s first two—and to a lesser extend third—books in order to recover the pieces of Machiavelli's theory.

This chapter breaks into five parts. In Parts One and Two I examine the primary drivers of the imperial process that Machiavelli theorizes in the *Discorsi*. Why is it that, on Machiavelli's account, political agents want to create empires in the first place? Attempting to answer this question first involves considering Machiavelli's thoughts on human nature (Part One), which are strewn throughout his writings. It also entails seeing how that nature begins to

[441] "Avendo ne' discorsi del superior libro parlato delle deliberazioni fatte da' romani pertinenti al di dentro della città." *Discorsi* 2. *proemio*, p. 135.

be reflected in and shaped by the most primitive forms of the state (Part Two). In Parts Three and Four I turn to examine how the imperial impulse is modulated in different ways as the state becomes further refined. Machiavelli compares the imperial behaviour of conservative and expansionist versions of the republic (Part Three), and, more broadly, of free and unfree states (Part Four). With a sense of what the imperial republic essentially is and what it basically wants to do in place, I conclude in Part Five by looking more closely at Machiavelli's account in Book Two of the *Discorsi* of how the Roman people went about expanding its *imperio*, and what consequences that process had for other peoples and states.

Machiavelli's analysis in the *Discorsi* of all these issues is tied to the facts, such as he sees them, of the Roman Republic's project to subordinate the Italian peninsula, and later the wider Mediterranean world, to its *imperio*, which in his eyes provides a singularly ideal model of empire. In his insistence that the Romans embody best imperial practice, Machiavelli is of course hardly breaking new ground; many of his Florentine humanist predecessors, as well as the Romans themselves, had thought the same.[442] Yet Machiavelli casts a gaze over the Roman Republic's imperial record that is utterly subversive. For not only does he see that the imperial actions of the *populus Romanus* quite plainly have nothing at all to do with Christian ethics; he also maintains that they have scarcely anything to do with Ciceronian moral philosophy. Machiavelli thus sweeps aside the labours of other Florentine humanists who had sought to reinvigorate a Ciceronian moral defense of republican empire in order to clear the ground for an imperial theory that is founded on his own view of historical reality. This theory will appear

[442] Hörnqvist, however, has observed a skepticism in Florentine governmental circles after 1494 about the viability of direct imitation of Roman political and military institutions. See Hörnqvist, "Machiavelli and the Florentine Militia," 165–69.

shockingly alien to any thinker adopting a generally Ciceronian, let alone an Augustinian, approach to matters of imperial justice. Indeed, as we are going to see, it is a theory that is entirely unburdened by any need to legitimize imperial expansion with appeals to some understanding of natural justice, or even to some minimal humanitarian principle that one should seek to uphold the free status of imperial subjects. Machiavelli's theory is in fact designed in such a way that the idea that a state could be both free and subject to a foreign *imperio* becomes a contradiction in terms; there is very little sense in speaking of some transcendental notion of inter-state justice under such circumstances.[443] It is crucial to recognize at the outset that this is a theory built just as much around the concept of servitude as it is around that of liberty.

Before submerging ourselves in the theory, it is perhaps worth issuing a warning: Machiavelli's theory of empire is not for the faint-hearted. Virtually all modern readers of the *Discorsi* have found it hard to stomach the starkness of the vision of imperial politics presented in the text. This has led to a number of attempts to defang Machiavelli's republican imperialism.[444] Even those scholars who have taken a long, steady look at Machiavelli's thinking

[443] This of course is not to say that Machiavelli thinks that an agent cannot be under *imperio* and remain free; in order to be classed as a republic, a state must hold the sovereign power of command over its citizens in such a way that they retain their liberty. Given this, domestic republican politics for Machiavelli is in large part a matter of ensuring that the source of authority which empowers the institutionalized forms of the command and obedience relationship within the state remains located in the body of the people itself, and not in the hands of private individuals or factions.

[444] Maurizio Viroli's brisk discussion of Machiavelli's treatment of foreign affairs has been particularly influential in this respect. See Viroli, *Machiavelli*, 139–40: "for … [Machiavelli] territorial aggrandizement does not mean conquest and predatory expansion … not just in the *Discourses* but in all his writings on the subject, he condemns the policy of expansion through conquest and subjection." More recently, see McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy*, 38: "Roman-style imperialism may be only one of several military options for Machiavelli – in fact, … given the decisive role that imperial expansion plays in Machiavelli's account of liberty's demise and the republic's collapse, it is perhaps not the most preferable." Machiavelli may well want to shepherd the supposedly corrupted Florentines of his day towards a less ambitious federative model, but the Roman imperial republic remains his ideal standard. Moreover, if we follow McCormick in seeing Machiavelli's praise of Roman imperialism in the *Discorsi* simply as a strategic move aimed to persuade the *grandi* to support "democratic" republicanism (p. 58), then we will find it hard to appreciate the

about empire, including Mikael Hörnqvist in his monograph on the topic, have been unable to register his point that subjection to a foreign *imperio*, however benignly camouflaged, constitutes slavery.[445] There is nothing at all to be gained from denying the place of servitude in Machiavelli's political thought, but we are only now beginning to appreciate how much there is to be lost.[446] If Machiavelli can help us see through what must be the illusory claim that a subjected people may enjoy real liberty under another's imperial rule, then we will be left looking out on a profoundly altered world of states.

I. HUMAN NATURE AND ACQUISITIVE DESIRE

When attempting to reconstruct any part of Machiavelli's theoretical architecture, it would seem sensible to start with what, if anything, he reveals about its foundations. For Machiavelli's theory of empire, the place to begin is with his repeated assertion that human nature is acquisitive. We saw him lay down in *Il Principe* 3—the first and lengthiest of the three chapters he devotes to the

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profound sophistication of Machiavelli's theoretical treatment of empire in the text. See also Benner, *Machiavelli's Ethics*, 475: Machiavelli "dissimulates admiration" for the Roman mode of imperial expansion. Alissa M. Ardito argues that in the *Discorsi* Machiavelli was "consciously trying to renovate Roman practices and popular government not to recreate an empire, but to pave the way for a territorially expansive republic." Ardito, *Machiavelli and the Modern State*, 93. Ardito does not make clear, however, how Machiavelli himself might have gone about drawing such a conceptual distinction.

[445] Hörnqvist sees Machiavelli restating a Roman and humanist case for "liberty at home, empire abroad." Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 72: in the *Discorsi* Machiavelli "summarizes this more than century-long tradition." The concept of slavery is entirely absent from Hörnqvist's reconstruction of Machiavelli's imperial thinking. Oddly, although Ardito notes in passing that Machiavelli associates imperial subjection to a republic with servitude, she argues that his theory of "the extended territorial republic" enables the state to expand without destroying other peoples' liberty, in large part by following the Roman example. Ardito, *Machiavelli and the Modern State*, 105–ff.

[446] As Stacey is showing in his present and forthcoming work. For now, see Stacey, "Free and Unfree States."

principato misto, or the imperial version of the new principality—that "it is very natural and normal to want to acquire things."[447] The thought that humans are naturally predisposed to want to possess things recurs in the *Discorsi* and, as will become clearer below, is of elemental importance to Machiavelli's political philosophy in general. But before we can go any further, we need to reflect on what it might mean for Machiavelli to think that certain facets of human behaviour are produced by nature.

The limited scholarship there is on Machiavelli's understanding of human nature tends to present us with a rather flat picture of the conceptual terrain; for instance, Machiavelli is said simply to have a 'fixed' view of human nature.[448] But a point that needs to be stressed immediately is that, like us, Machiavelli uses the term 'nature' to signify two distinct, yet related, concepts: nature as a non-human agency or force (what we mean when we refer to 'Mother Nature' or 'the laws of nature'), and nature as the quality or character of something or someone (what we mean when we say 'it's in the nature of things' or 'it's not in her nature').[449] Of particular concern to us here is how far Machiavelli thinks that *natura* in the first sense determines our *natura* in the second. To complicate matters a little further, we should not assume that human nature will necessarily look the same to Machiavelli in a natural, non-political state

[447] See p. 149 above.

[448] Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 235–36. For fuller accounts, see Giulio Ferroni, "'Natura,' 'qualità' e apparenza nella figura del politico," in *Il ritratto e la memoria*, vol. 3: *Materiali*, eds. Augusto Gentili, Philippe Morel and Claudia Cieri Via (Rome: Bulzoni, 1994), 83–90; Cary J. Nederman, "Machiavelli and Moral Character: Principality, Republic and the Psychology of *Virtù*," *History of Political Thought* 21.3 (2000): 349–64.

[449] Machiavelli also uses the term '*qualità*' to speak about what we would call 'character.' Cary Nederman observes that Machiavelli "found it necessary to distinguish between individual characteristics and inclinations common to the human race," but it is not Nederman's concern to flesh out the content of the latter. Nederman, "Machiavelli and Moral Character," 356.

as it will in *the* state. If Machiavelli does think, as he must, that state structures can in some way mold their human materials, then we need to consider which parts of human nature are and are not resistant to such change; indeed, the degree of fixity in human nature will be a key issue below. We should also keep in mind that, given his persistent concern to bring out the differences between his two opposing forms of the state, the republic and the principality, Machiavelli can hardly avoid viewing human nature as manifesting in differing ways depending on whether it is set free or placed in chains; a point that, as we shall see, he will enlarge on an imperial scale. Finally, it is important to recognize that Machiavelli wants to distinguish between the *natura* of individual humans, of groups of humans, and of humanity at large.

It is often said that Machiavelli thinks that human nature is basically inflexible.[450] And, to be fair, it would seem that there is considerable textual material in support of this conclusion, and perhaps none more persuasive than what he has to say on the topic of *fortuna* in the famous twenty-fifth chapter of *Il Principe*. Here Machiavelli claims that human fortune or misfortune is the result of whether or not an individual's peculiar "way of proceeding" (*il modo del procedere*) is in step with the times. It is worth noting in passing that Machiavelli asserts here that humans are all led towards the same end, namely "glory and riches," but the more relevant point for us to observe is that he thinks the manner in which humans attempt to reach their common objective varies among individuals.[451] Even more crucially, Machiavelli appears to reject the idea that one can hope to alter one's particular way of operating in order to suit the times; at least no such

[450] Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 235: "the nature of an individual is given once and for all, the person in question cannot change his nature, only develop its potential."

[451] "Si vede gli uomini, nelle cose che gli conducono al fine quale ciascuno ha innanzi, cioè gloria e ricchezze, procedervi variamente." *Il Principe* 25, p. 164. As in the previous chapter, my translations of *Il Principe* revise Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Skinner and Price.

individual has ever been found. This is partly because a man who has enjoyed success following one course of action will not be persuaded to change tack, but also, and it would seem more tellingly, because "he cannot deviate from that which nature inclines him."[452] All the same, Machiavelli still wants to suggest that "if one were able to change nature with the times and circumstances, one's [good] fortune would not change."[453]

This string of propositions—humans strive towards their end/s in varying ways; this variation is produced by differences in human character; individuals have proved they find it impossible to alter their characters, even though being able to do so would be highly advantageous—is visible elsewhere in Machiavelli's corpus. It had appeared some seven years earlier in a letter he addressed to Giovan Battista Soderini, the so-called *Ghiribizzi al Soderini* (1506). Here Machiavelli notes that "just as nature has made man a diverse face, so it has made him a diverse intellect [*ingegno*] and a diverse imagination [*fantasia*]. Consequently, every man acts according to the intellect and imagination that governs him."[454] Machiavelli is picking out in this passage natural qualities of human character with the language of *ingenium* and *fantasia* that Cicero uses in *De officiis* to discuss our natural creative faculties. Machiavelli goes on to say that no man can be found who is able to tailor his actions to the times, since men are both

[452] "Né si truova uomo sí prudente che si sappia accommodare a questo: sí perché non si può deviare da quello a che la natura lo inclina, sí etiam perché, avendo sempre uno prosperato camminando per una via, non si può persuadere che sia bene partirsi da quella." *Il Principe* 25, pp. 165–66.

[453] "Che se si mutassi natura con e' tempi e con le cose, non si muterebbe fortuna." *Il Principe* 25, p. 166.

[454] "Come la natura ha fatto a l'uomo diverso volto, cosí li abbi fatto diverso ingegno e diversa fantasia. Da questo nasce che ciascuno secondo lo ingegno e fantasia sua si governa." Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. 2, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), 137. (My translation.)

shortsighted and cannot "command their nature."[455] Machiavelli expresses in a more poetic register a similar thought in the *Capitoli di fortuna* (1506?). In the poem he warns that one cannot hope to keep jumping between Fortune's spinning wheels in order to remain constantly on the up, since one cannot "change persona / nor give up the disposition that heaven endows you with."[456] Machiavelli proceeds to insist, however, that a man should nonetheless "take her [Fortuna] for his star / and, as far as possible, every hour / adjust himself to her variations."[457] By the time we reach the *Discorsi*, Machiavelli tells us that he has often remarked that "the cause of mankind's ill or good fortune lies in matching one's course of action with the times."[458] And here he repeats even more emphatically the point that we cannot change our way of operating because "we cannot oppose what nature inclines us towards."[459]

Machiavelli, then, does seem to hold with some consistency the view that nature is responsible for producing a variety of human character traits, and that individuals cannot hope to change whichever set of traits they possess. It is, however, critical to see that in all these passages Machiavelli is saying something about the limits of human self-determination: *we*

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[455] "Avendo li uomini prima la vista corta e non potendo poi comandare alla natura loro." Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. 2, ed. Vivanti, 137–38.

[456] "Non potendo tu cangiar persona, / né lasciar l'ordin di che 'il ciel ti dota." *Capitoli di fortuna*, lines 112–13 in Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli*, ed. Ezio Raimondi (Milan: Ugo Mursia, 1966). (My translation.)

[457] "Si vuol lei prender per sua stella, / e quanto a noi è possibile, ogni ora / accomodarsi al variar di quella." *Capitoli di fortuna*, lines 124–26.

[458] "Io ho considerate piú volte come la cagione della trista e della buona fortuna degli uomini è riscontrare il modo del procedure suo con i tempi." *Discorsi* 3.9, p. 256.

[459] "Non ci possiano opporre a quello a che c'inclina la natura." *Discorsi* 3.9, p. 258. See also *Discorsi* 3.8, p. 255 for the point that men who are not in harmony with the times due to a bad choice or their "naturale inclinazione" will normally be unhappy and unsuccessful.

cannot change *our* natures. But this is of course to leave open the possibility that forces which do not emanate from within ourselves might be able to affect changes to our characters. Moreover, Machiavelli appears to envisage a kind of experiential process of character formation when he notes in *Il Principe* that humans will not be persuaded to change those methods which they have found to be successful in the past.[460] We might want to question therefore if Machiavelli does think that human character really is set in stone from the beginning, or if it is not rather something that, while crystalizing over time, never becomes entirely impervious to change.[461] Such a conclusion finds support in *Discorsi* 1.42, where Machiavelli comments on the corrupting effects of the Second Decemvirate headed by Appius Claudius Crassus. He notes that the former consul Quintus Fabius Vibulanus, "blinded by a little ambition and persuaded by the evil of Appius, changed his good customs to the worst;"[462] a development which illustrates "how easily men are corrupted, and made to assume a wholly contrary nature, however good and well brought up they may have been."[463] Even the very best men's natures, it turns out, are not immune to being changed and corrupted by others. This episode should in Machiavelli's view convince those who make laws for both republics and kingdoms of the need "to bridle human appetites, and to take away from them all hope of being able to err with impunity."[464] Here

[460] *Il Principe* 25, p. 165–66; *Discorsi* 3.9, p. 258.

[461] Nederman, "Machiavelli and Moral Character," 356–57.

[462] "Accecato da uno poco d'ambizione e persuaso dalla malignità di Appio, mutò i suoi buoni costumi in pessimi." *Discorsi* 1.42, p. 97.

[463] "Quanto facilmente gli uomini si corrompono, e fannosi diventare di contraria natura, quantunque buoni e bene ammaestrati." *Discorsi* 1.42, p. 97.

[464] "Il che esaminato bene, farà tanto piú pronti i datori di leggi delle republiche o de' regni a frenare gli appetite umani, e tôrre loro ogni speranza di potere impune errare." *Discorsi* 1.42, p. 97.

human nature is unquestionably liable to change if the appetites that in some way underpin it are manipulated. The issue that Machiavelli is highlighting is that, in a well-functioning state, it is public, not private, forces which must conform human appetites.

This image of a malleable human character is also not entirely absent from *Il Principe*. In one of the work's most infamous passages, Machiavelli claims that a prince must know how to use both the bestial and the human natures embodied by the centaur Chiron. Machiavelli is of course speaking through allegory here, yet his comments are nonetheless revealing: Chiron served as a "teacher" (*precettore*) to Achilles and other mythical *principi*, and thus encouraged his charges to develop a composite, bestial-human nature.[465] Here *natura* is something that an individual can cultivate under the right instruction, and we may indeed wonder if Machiavelli sees himself playing the role of Chiron for his princely readers; he certainly urges them to "be the fox … and the lion" and thereby embrace the use of deception and force when endeavoring to maintain their states.[466] Machiavelli further illustrates, yet also complicates, this point in the following chapter: "I want to show briefly how well he [i.e. the Roman emperor Septimius Severus] knew how to use the persona of the fox and of the lion; natures which … are necessary for a prince to imitate."[467] Here Machiavelli does not tell us that Severus learned to cultivate his own vulpine and leonine personas / natures, but instead how to imitate personas / natures which seem to be *external* to him. The picture that Machiavelli presents of individual human nature is therefore quite nuanced, but its outlines should now be clear enough: even if individuals cannot

[465] *Il Principe* 18, pp. 115–16.

[466] "Bisogna adunque essere golpe … e lione." *Il Principe* 18, p. 116.

[467] "Io voglio brevemente mostrare quanto e' seppe bene usare la persona del lione e della golpe." *Il Principe* 19, p. 130.

change their natures themselves, they can learn how to cultivate, or imitate, a variety of character traits, and even select between them according to circumstance. After all, without some degree of pliability in an individual's nature, Machiavelli's project in *Il Principe* would seem to be rather futile.

So far we have been following the observations that Machiavelli makes on human nature when he is viewing individual human subjects. We now need to consider what he has to say about the topic when he turns to inspect groups of humans and, finally, humanity at large. Machiavelli's thinking in this area is again rather subtle, as he continues to describe a human nature that has both fixed and flexible aspects. Two chapters of the *Discorsi* in which Machiavelli discusses what in modern parlance might be called 'national character' illustrate this duality. *Discorsi* 3.43 bears the title: "Men born in a country [*provincia*] conform more or less to the same nature for all time."[468] Although we should note that the term *natura* does not reappear in the chapter's text, it is fair to say that Machiavelli discusses here *natura* in the sense of 'character.' Machiavelli had employed the term in a similar way in the title of an earlier work, *On the Nature of the French* (c. 1500–03), in which he had excoriated French behaviour and mores.[469] In 3.43 Machiavelli reprises a common theme of his political thought: history is a useful guide to interpreting the present and predicting the future because it allows us to observe the effects of recurring human passions.[470] We saw this sentiment in *Del modo*, and it also

[468] "Che gli uomini, che nascono in una provincia osservino per tutti i tempi quasi quella medesima natura." *Discorsi* 3.43, p. 325.

[469] *Scritti politici minori*, 455–57.

[470] "Chi vuole vedere quello che ha a essere consideri quello che è stato: perché tutte le cose del mondo, in ogni tempo, hanno il proprio riscontro con gli antichi tempi. Il che nasce perché, essendo quelle operate dagli

features in *Discorsi* 1.39, where Machiavelli observes that "the same desires and feelings [*omori*] exist in all cities and all peoples."[471] Here in 3.43 the point lays the groundwork for some chauvinistic commentary on the Germans and French, whose recent avaricious and fraudulent behaviour, according to Machiavelli, should not surprise the Florentines, since it is simply the latest occurrence of "the ancient customs of the barbarians."[472] Although Machiavelli maintains that the Germans and French exhibit certain character traits which have been ingrained since antiquity, he does not say that these traits are implanted by *nature*, but rather that they are produced from habituation. The behaviour of peoples forming national groups differs according to "the form of the upbringing [*educazione*] from which those peoples have derived their way of life." It follows that to infer the future from the past is possible when one can see that a nation has kept the same customs for a long time, which, in Machiavelli's view, is true with respect to both Germany and France.[473] Although Machiavelli seems to think, then, that the same passions recur in humans throughout history, he believes that these passions are shaped in differing ways according to peculiar national structures; we seem to have a movement from *passioni* to *costumi*

uomini che hanno ed ebbono sempre le medesime passioni, conviene di necessità che le sortischino il medesimo effetto." *Discorsi* 3.43, p. 325.

[471] "In tutte le città ed in tutti i popoli sono quegli medesimi desiderii e quelli medesimi omori, e come vi furono sempre." *Discorsi* 1.39, p. 90.

[472] "In modo che se Firenze non fosse stata o costretta dalla necessità o vinta dalla passione ed avesse letti e conosciuti gli antichi costumi de' barbari … essendo loro stati sempre a un modo ed avendo in ogni parte e con ognuno usati i medesimi termini." *Discorsi* 3.43, p. 326.

[473] "Le sono le opere loro ora in questa provincia piú virtuose che in quella, ed in quella piú che in questa, secondo la forma della educazione nella quale quegli popoli hanno preso il modo del vivere loro. Fa ancora facilità il conoscere le cose future per le passate, vedere una nazione lungo tempo tenere i medesimi costumi." *Discorsi* 3.43, p. 325.

via *educazione*. However unwavering a nation's character may be, it is nevertheless, at least in part, the work of an ongoing historical process.

The point that national character is something which can be fashioned becomes even clearer when we turn to *Discorsi* 3.36. Machiavelli is again moved to make some rather ungenerous, and in this case highly gendered, comments about the French, echoing Livy's remark that they begin a battle as more than men but end it as less than women. As an explanation for this behaviour, Machiavelli endorses the view that "their nature is like that." However, he is quick to point out that it does not follow that "there is no reason why this nature of theirs, which makes them ferocious at the start, could not be skillfully disciplined [*con l'arte ordinare*] to keep them ferocious until the end."[474] He goes on to praise the exemplary discipline of the Roman army, whose good order produced both fury and virtue, before denigrating contemporary Italian armies, which have "neither natural fury nor incidental discipline" (*furore natural né ordine accidentale*).[475] His militia project had of course aimed to provide Florence with soldiers who, if not naturally ferocious like the French, would acquire a virtuous fury through military discipline. Yet again Machiavelli is concerned both to show us a human nature that is composed of largely static elements, and to develop a political theory which is designed to work upon those elements.

We are now in a position to return to the founding premise of Machiavelli's theory of empire, namely that human nature is acquisitive. It must be underlined that the desire to acquire

[474] "La natura loro cosí fatta: il che credo sia vero, ma non è per questo che questa loro natura, che gli fa feroci nel principio, non si potesse in modo con l'arte ordinare, che la gli mantenesse feroci infino nello ultimo." *Discorsi* 3.36, p. 314.

[475] *Discorsi* 3.36, p. 315.

things is natural to humans in a way that the types of 'character traits' that we have been examining, and which, as we have seen, Machiavelli can also place under the heading of *natura*, are not. It is distinctively 'natural' in three ways. First, it appears to predate the creation of states. Second, it is shared by humans as a species, and not confined to individuals or national groups. And third, it seems to be highly resistant, if not impervious, to being changed, either by individuals themselves, or by external forces; that is to say one cannot, without controverting one's nature, go from wanting to acquire things to being forever content with what one has. The desire to acquire is therefore primordial, ubiquitous, and ineliminable, and these features secure it a special place in Machiavelli's political theory. Indeed, the way in which acquisitive desire is allowed to manifest in a group of humans largely determines the type of state that is produced.

We noted above that Machiavelli found it necessary to mention in *Il Principe* 3 the naturalness of the desire to acquire when he was discussing imperial expansion and the "mixed principality." Yet in this text he did not feel the need to clarify the point that, in his view, acquisitive desire is naturally insatiable, as he explains repeatedly in the *Discorsi*. It can hardly be a coincidence that in the preface to the book of the *Discorsi* dedicated to Rome's prodigious imperial growth Machiavelli observes that "human desires [*appetiti*] are insatiable, because nature has given us the ability and the will to desire everything and fortune has given us the ability to achieve but little."[476] Although Machiavelli notes that human desires, or rather the objects that desire fixes on, change over time—old men will not want the same things as young men—he thinks that desire itself remains insatiable. Now it must be true that princes, like all

[476] "Gli appetiti umani insaziabili, perché, avendo dalla natura di potere e volere desiderare ogni cosa, e dalla fortuna di potere conseguitarne poche." *Discorsi* 2. *proemio*, p. 134.

humans, naturally have insatiable acquisitive desires, but Machiavelli is generally unwilling to consider how princely desire can translate into large-scale imperial expansion. There is a noticeable conservatism to the prince's task as described in *Il Principe*, and we can certainly detect a shift from a language of maintenance to one of increase as we move from the earlier text to the *Discorsi*.[477] We will need to clarify later Machiavelli's distinction between the imperial prince and the imperial republic, but the fundamental point to observe now is that the republic—and particularly the popular, not aristocratic, republic—is constituted in such a way that it can maximize the occurrence of acquisitive desire in the state.

In *Discorsi* 1.37 Machiavelli offers one of his fullest accounts of the type of human subject with which his political theory has to reckon, and it is a subject defined principally by acquisitive desire:

> Ancient writers had the maxim that men are wont to be distressed by evil and bored by good and that both of these two passions produce the same results. For whenever men cease fighting out of necessity, they fight out of ambition: it is so powerful in men's hearts that it never leaves them, no matter what position they have attained. The reason is that nature has created men such that they can desire all things but cannot obtain all things, so, since desire is always greater than the power to acquire, the result is discontent and dissatisfaction with what we have. Hence the origin of the swings in their fortune: because men in part desire to have more and in part fear the loss of what they have acquired, they become embroiled in hatred and war, which destroy one country and raise another to new heights.[478]

[477] Stacey has forthcoming work on this contrast. For now, see Stacey, "Free and Unfree States."

[478] "Egli è sentenzia degli antichi scrittori come gli uomini sogliono affliggersi nel male e stuccarsi nel bene, e come dall'una e dall'altra di queste due passioni nascano i medesimi effetti. Perché qualunque volta è tolto agli uomini il combattere per necessità, combattono per ambizione; la quale è tanto potente ne' petti umani, che mai, a qualunque grado si salgano, gli abbandona. La cagione è perché la natura ha creati gli uomini in modo che possono desiderare ogni cosa, e non possono conseguire ogni cosa: talché essendo sempre maggiore il desiderio che la potenza dello acquistare, ne risulta la mala contentezza di quello che si possiede e la poca sodisfazione d'esso. Da questo nasce il variare della fortuna loro, perché, disiderando gli uomini, parte di avere

These remarks serve as a preface to Machiavelli's discussion of the Agrarian Law and the class conflict which the legislation was designed to address. Machiavelli locates the ultimate source of the conflict in insatiable, acquisitive desire: the Romans were impelled by nature to acquire foreign people's things, in this case their land, and there followed a struggle over how that land should be distributed among the Roman people's two constitutive social groups, the patricians and the plebs. Thus the agrarian problem is in Machiavelli's analysis an archetypal problem of empire: how to share the spoils of imperial growth?[479] The fact that the Roman plebs were able to agitate so vigorously for their share is a result of Rome's peculiar constitutional arrangement, which had empowered the class through the institution of the tribunate. As Machiavelli notes, "it was not enough for the Roman plebs to protect themselves against the patricians by creating the tribunes, a desire forced on them by necessity; once they attained their goal, they immediately began fighting out of ambition and trying to share public offices [*onori*] and property [*sustanze*] since these are what men most prize."[480] It would therefore be a mistake to think that the *popolo* for Machiavelli is unambitious; the Roman experience shows that, given half a chance, it will, in accordance with the natural human desire to acquire, come to demand more and more. The *popolo*'s ambitions may be frustrated in aristocratic republics—which, as we shall see,

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piú, parte temendo di non perdere lo acquistato, si viene alle inimicizie ed alla guerra, dalla quale nasce la rovina di quella provincia e la esaltazione di quell'altra." *Discorsi* 1.37, p. 84.

[479] On Machiavelli's response to the agrarian problem, see Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 212–14; Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49–86.

[480] "Alla plebe romana non bastò assicurarsi de' nobili per la creazione de' tribuni, al quale desiderio fu costretta per necessità; ché lei, subito, ottenuto quello, cominciò a combattere per ambizione, e volere con la nobiltà dividere gli onori e le sustanze come cosa stimata piú dagli uomini." *Discorsi* 1.37, p. 84.

Machiavelli thinks makes them relatively weak imperial states—but it cannot be eliminated. The key to Roman liberty, Machiavelli reveals towards the end of this discourse, is that the plebs, with laws and their "own desires" (*appetiti*), were able "to bridle the patrician's ambition" (*frenato l'ambizione de' nobili*). But eventually constitutional mechanisms would prove insufficient to solve the agrarian problem: "the Roman patricians always yielded offices [*onori*] up to the plebs without undue turmoil; but when material goods [*roba*] were involved, they were so stubborn about protecting them that the plebs resorted to extraordinary means to vent their desire [*isfogare l'appetito suo*]."[481] Machiavelli's theory of desire is therefore slanted towards material things. In the most basic terms, empire is not so much a matter of honour or glory, but rather a function of humans' natural desire to get their hands on a perpetually increasing pile of physical stuff.

II. ACQUISITIVE DESIRE AND THE ORIGINS OF STATES

Now that we have a more developed image of the natural characteristics of Machiavelli's human subject and observed the prominence here of insatiable acquisitive desire, our next step is to examine what Machiavelli thinks happens to that desire when it is brought into the state. Although Machiavelli is quite clearly not a theorist who is interested in deriving legitimating principles for political authority from some conception of a state of nature, he is one who believes that statecraft involves working with natural materials. As Peter Stacey has put it, states

[481] "La nobilità romana sempre negli onori cedé sanza scandoli straordinari alla plebe; ma come si venne alla roba, fu tanta la ostinazione sua nel difenderla, che la plebe ricorse, per isfogare l'appetito suo, a quegli straordinari." *Discorsi* 1.37, pp. 86–87.

for Machiavelli are "spatio-temporal entities consisting of clumps of bodies possessed of naturally recurring properties; but this material must be transformed … States are thus neither purely artificial nor purely natural entities: they hover between the realms of nature and artifice."[482] In what way, then, do states work on the natural desire to acquire, and what work does this desire do to states?

I want to argue that Machiavelli thinks that the state's origins lie in a collective response to the problems caused by acquisitive desire. In *Discorsi* 1.2 Machiavelli takes us back to a primordial moment in order to sketch out an account of state formation and regime change, an account which has been shown to borrow material from Polybius, and perhaps also from some other classical authors. Machiavelli pinpoints the inception of political authority at a moment of demographic growth that seems to bring with it growing concerns over security:

> At the beginning of the world, when inhabitants were few, people lived for a time scattered [*dispersi*] like beasts. Then, as the population increased, they gathered together and, the better to defend themselves, began to look to the strongest and bravest one among them, made him their chief [*capo*], and obeyed him.[483]

Humans, then, first choose to submit to political authority in order to increase their security. Machiavelli, however, does not tell us *what* it is that these early humans felt threatened by. Polybius, undoubtedly one of Machiavelli's sources in 1.2, observes in Book Six of the *Histories*:

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[482] Stacey, "Free and Unfree States," 191.

[483] "Nel principio del mondo, sendo gli abitatori radi, vissono un tempo dispersi a similitudine delle bestie; dipoi, moltiplicando la generazione, si ragunarono insieme, e, per potersi meglio difendere, cominciarono a riguardare infra loro quello che fusse piú robusto e di maggiore cuore, e fecionlo come capo, e lo ubedivano." *Discorsi* 1.2, p. 12.

> When … men have again increased in numbers and just like other animals form[ed] herds … it is a necessary consequence that the man who excels in bodily strength and in courage will lead and rule over the rest … It is probable then that at the beginning men lived thus, herding together like animals and following the lead of the strongest and bravest, the ruler's strength being here the criterion of his real power and the name we should give this being monarchy.[484]

Polybius does not spell out in this passage or those that follow Machiavelli's point that the creation of monarchy is the result of a human calculation about how best to provide for defense. Although Polybius notes that humans will favour and honour "any man who is foremost in defending his fellows from danger, and braves and awaits the onslaught of the most powerful beasts," this remark is not tied explicitly to the initial creation of monarchical authority.[485] For Polybius, humans seem to follow the strongest individual among them according simply to some kind of animal instinct. Moreover, it seems that, at least in the early stages of the group's life, these humans obey the monarch, not because of the protection he can offer them, but because "they fear his force."[486] When we look closely, then, we will see that the specifically Machiavellian bargain made at the inception of the state of submission in exchange for security is not present in Polybius.

Another classical source that Machiavelli may be engaging with here is Lucretius, whose *De rerum natura* he had transcribed in full almost certainly before he started composing the

[484] Polyb. 6.5.5–9.

[485] Polyb. 6.6.8.

[486] Polyb. 6.6.10.

Discorsi.[487] Lucretius, however, does not specify in his long, sequential account of the development of civilization in Book Five of *De rerum natura* that humans are motivated to establish political authority by their anxiety about the dangers they face in a natural state. Although there may perhaps be linguistic echoes of passages of Book Five in *Discorsi* 1.2, Lucretius can hardly be guiding Machiavelli's theory, as the Latin poet envisages the first institution of political authority as a top-down process: the decisive shift from a natural to a civil state seems to occur for Lucretius when kings "began to found cities and to build a citadel for their own refuge."[488]

Diodorus Siculus, whose work Machiavelli will cite—albeit disapprovingly—later at *Discorsi* 2.5, reports an account of early human life that connects the beginnings of human association with a need for collective defense, in this case from animals: "since they [the first humans] were attacked by the wild beasts, they came to each other's aid, being instructed by expediency, and when gathered together in this way by reason of their fear, they gradually came to recognize their mutual characteristics."[489] Once these primitive groups developed language, they came to form the basis of "all the original nations of the world."[490] However, Diodorus's account of the origins of human association in these passages does not treat, strictly speaking, the

[487] Ada Palmer notes that Machiavelli probably copied the text in the later 1490s and in all likelihood before the first Florentine edition of *De rerum natura* was published in 1509. Ada Palmer, *Reading Lucretius in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 81–88. For more on Machiavelli's engagement with Lucretius, see Alison Brown, *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 68–87. For the argument that Lucretius is Machiavelli's primary classical influence in the *Discorsi*, see Paul Rahe, "In the Shadow of Lucretius: The Epicurean Foundations of Machiavelli's Political Thought," *History of Political Thought* 28.1 (2007): 30–55.

[488] Lucr. 5.1108–09.

[489] Diod. 1.8.2. See Anne Burton, *Diodorus Siculus, Book 1: A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 47–51.

[490] Diod. 1.8.4.

creation of political authority. Indeed, Diodorus wants to avoid speculating about the moment when humans made the transition from a natural to a civil state, acknowledging that "as to who were the first kings we are in no position to speak on our own authority, nor do we give assent to those historians who profess to know."[491] He instead leaves behind the earlier conjectural history of early human development to turn to the beginnings of recorded civilization in Egypt. Later in Book One, when Diodorus considers why the Egyptians deified animals, he records an alternative developmental story which comes closer to touching on the origins of states:

> When men, they say, first ceased living like the beasts and gathered into groups, at the outset they kept devouring each other and warring among themselves, the more powerful ever prevailing over the weaker; but later those who were deficient in strength, taught by expediency, grouped together and took for the device upon their standard one of the animals which was later made sacred; then, when those who were from time to time in fear flocked to this symbol, an organized body was formed which was not to be despised by any who attacked it. And when everybody else did the same thing, the whole people came to be divided into organized bodies.[492]

Here we have an interesting sequel to Diodorus's earlier account of primitive human development. We had been told that humans first came together to defend themselves from the attacks of wild animals, but now it is suggested that, after these groups had formed, humans immediately began to suffer at each other's hands. This intra-group violence motivates some humans to refine their first attempts at social organization. If Diodorus does envisage a sequence of early human development in which an animal threat gives way to a human threat, then he is in line with Plato's Protagoras:

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[491] Diod. 1.9.2.

[492] Diod. 1.90.1–2.

> Men dwelt separately in the beginning, and cities there were none; so that they were being destroyed by the wild beasts, since these were in all ways stronger than they … So they sought to band themselves together and secure their lives by founding cities. Now as often as they were banded together they did wrong to one another through the lack of civic art, and thus they began to be scattered again and to perish. So Zeus, fearing that our race was in danger of utter destruction, sent Hermes to bring respect and right among men, to the end that there should be regulation of cities and friendly ties to draw them together.[493]

Beyond the connection between defensive anxieties and the origins of the state, this account is quite obviously alien to Machiavelli's theoretical concerns in *Discorsi* 1.2: Protagoras's *deus-ex-machina* explanation for the emergence of justice will clearly not be appealing to Machiavelli, and, moreover, the creation of monarchy is not discussed by Plato here. Diodorus also does not take us directly from a first revision of social life in the face of human-on-human violence to the institution of monarchy. It may, however, be significant that, immediately following his remarks quoted above on totemism and human group formation, Diodorus notes the importance of benefaction and gratitude in notions of Egyptian kingship, suggesting a complex of ideas about the origins of the state, monarchy, and the benefactor-beneficiary relationship which is mirrored in Machiavelli's theory in *Discorsi* 1.2.[494]

Finally, it is revealing to turn to some Ciceronian accounts.[495] In *De inventione* and *Pro Sestio* Cicero provides similar etiologies for the creation of the state, both of which envisage a

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[493] Plat. *Prot*. 322a–c.

[494] Machiavelli may also have in mind here passages from Aristotle's *Politics* and Seneca's *De beneficiis*; see Stacey's forthcoming work.

[495] For Cicero's "brutish state of nature," see Benjamin Straumann, *Crisis and Constitutionalism. Roman Political Thought from the Fall of the Republic to the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 161–68.

moment at which men are simultaneously brought together and taken out of a natural state by a figure who is differentiated from the rest, not by his strength and bravery, but by what we might call more intellectual or rational qualities. In *De inventione* this man is outstandingly "great and wise" (*magnus … et sapiens*), and in *Pro Sestio* he is distinguished by his "merit and wisdom" (*virtute et consilio*).[496] Now these accounts are distinctively different to Machiavelli's, as Cicero describes the creation of the state as a single, top-down process, focusing on a preeminently rational being; Machiavelli, on the other hand, sees primitive humans coming together of their own accord and subsequently elevating one of their group to the position of *capo*. However, the problem that we are principally concerned with is not so much the manner in which the state comes into being, but rather why there is a state at all: what is going on in nature that makes humans want to exit this state by succumbing to political authority? In answering this question the Cicero of these texts, I think, may be rather closer to Machiavelli.

In *De inventione* Cicero imagines a state of nature in which human desire is running riot: " blind and unreasoning passion satisfied itself by misuse of bodily strength."[497] Cicero says no more here about what human relations actually look like under such chaotic circumstances, but in *Pro Sestio* the picture becomes a little clearer:

> There was once a time, before either natural or civil law had been formulated, when men roamed, scattered and dispersed over the country, and had no other possessions than just so much as they had been able either to seize by strength and violence, or keep at the cost of slaughter and wounds.[498]

[496] Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.2; Cic. *Sest*. 90.

[497] Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.2.

[498] Cic. *Sest.* 91.

As Benjamin Straumann has underlined, Cicero presents us here with a strikingly Hobbesian image of a natural state in which unbridled passion drives humans to violent conflict, a conflict which is primarily over material possessions.[499] I want to suggest that Machiavelli's single-sentence account of the state of nature in *Discorsi* 1.2 is undergirded by a conception of natural human desire and corresponding primitive human relations that bears some resemblance to the one evident in these Ciceronian texts. Whether Machiavelli's state of nature prefigures that of Hobbes is, however, another matter.

It is true that Machiavelli's account in *Discorsi* 1.2 is skeletal to the extreme, but we can add some flesh to his broader thinking about the origins of the state by examining *Discorsi* 1.1. In both discourses Machiavelli is concerned with how political life gets going, but while in 1.2 he is focused on the state's constitutional foundation, embodied in its first laws (*leggi*) and institutions (*ordini*), in 1.1 he considers its physical foundation, which takes the form of a city (*città*). These distinct yet connected interests are signaled by the terminology employed in each discourse's title: that of 1.1 refers to "cities" (*città*), while that of 1.2 speaks of "republics" (*republiche*), which is here used as a generic term for either a republican or princely state. The city, then, might be best described as the receptacle in which the body of the state is sustained. How rigidly Machiavelli's Italian observes a distinction that we find in Latin literature between the *urbs* and the *civitas* remains an open question, yet in the opening chapter of the *Discorsi* Machiavelli clearly does want to isolate for analysis the physical beginnings of states, saving his discussion of their initial constitutional formation for the following chapter.

[499] Straumann, *Crisis and Constitutionalism*, 163–64.

That Machiavelli is principally concerned in 1.1 with the initial urban form that is given to states is indicated by the first binary distinction he introduces in the chapter, which is the first of the *Discorsi* proper: "all cities are built either by men indigenous to the place where they are built or by outsiders."[500] And the image of the *città* as a building site continues to appear throughout this discourse. An issue we need to consider is whether the state-building activity described in this chapter occupies the same conceptual plane in Machiavelli's mind as his more imaginative account of the origins of political authority in 1.2. Machiavelli takes first in 1.1 the building of cities by indigenous peoples, and his account of this process does indeed appear to bear a close resemblance to his remarks in 1.2. This type of city is built when:

> The inhabitants, scattered [*dispersi*] through many small villages [*parti*], do not feel they have a secure place to live in. Because of both its location and the smallness of its numbers, each cannot resist on its own the strength of those who attack them; and when the enemy comes, there is not enough time to band together for self-defense or, even if there were time enough, they would have to abandon many of their strongholds and would thus immediately become their enemies' prey. Therefore, to avoid these dangers—prompted either on their own or by someone with greater authority—they band together and dwell in a site they have selected that is more convenient to live in and easier to defend.[501]

Here, as in 1.2, defensive considerations provide the impulse for "scattered" human populations to form some kind of basic political organization. There are, however, some key differences

[500] "Tutte le cittadi sono edificate o dagli uomini natii del luogo dove le si edificano o dai forestieri." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 7.

[501] "Agli abitatori dispersi in molte e piccole parti non pare vivere securi non potendo ciascuna per sé, e per il sito e per il piccolo numero, resistere all'impeto di chi le assaltasse; e ad unirsi per loro difensione, venendo il nimico, non sono a tempo; o quando fussono, converrebbe loro lasciare abbandonati molti de' loro ridotti; e cosí verrebbero ad essere súbita preda dei loro inimici: talmente che, per fuggire questi pericoli, mossi o da loro medesimi, o da alcuno che sia infra loro di maggiore autorità, si ristringono ad abitare insieme in luogo eletto da loro, piú commodo a vivere e piú facile a difendere." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 7.

between the two accounts; for instance, whereas in 1.2 the creation of a *capo*, and with him the beginning of political authority, was a bottom-up process, here the decision to found a city can be taken either by the disparate peoples themselves, or by some singular authority figure. Of greater importance to our concerns is the fact that Machiavelli is more explicit here than in 1.2 about the nature of the threat that disunited peoples face, namely that of foreign invasion. This is a world in which humans need to be concerned about being preyed on by their enemies, whom we can surely take to be other humans, and not wild animals.

Machiavelli illustrates this point when he turns to give his two case studies of indigenous city-building: Athens and Venice. Quickly passing over the mythical origins of Athens, Machiavelli notes that Venice was founded by peoples seeking to escape from the fluid and violent situation in Italy following the collapse of Roman imperial authority and the arrival of "new barbarians."[502] We are now clearly in a historical setting and obviously well beyond Machiavelli's primordial moment in 1.2 when humanity at large was scattered like beasts. But the question remains: once humans have entered history, do they still experience the same kind of natural state imagined in 1.2 when they are outside of *the* state? I suggest that Machiavelli thinks they do. When he is discussing the founding of cities here in 1.1, his conception of the human subject does not appear to be any different to the one he has in mind in 1.2. I want to argue that in both cases Machiavelli sees natural acquisitive desire as the driving force behind the work of state formation.

Having dispensed with cities built by indigenous peoples, Machiavelli next turns to the second branch of this chapter's main binary: cities built by outsiders. These builders can either

[502] *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 7.

be "free men" (*uomini liberi*) or men "dependent on others" (*dependono da altri*).[503] Let us take first the free builders. It is important to note that this group of people's freedom is conceived by Machiavelli in an *external* sense; that is to say it does not matter whether these people are acting "of their own accord" (*da per sé*) or are "under a prince" (*sotto uno principe*) – the point is that there is no agent directing the project from outside the group, as will be the case with colonial foundations. To think about liberty in this way is unusual for Machiavelli, as he is stunningly consistent in both *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi* on the point that people under princely rule are by definition unfree. Nevertheless, when he thinks about freedom in this chapter, his gaze is trained exclusively on a group of people's liberty in relation to a *foreign* agent. By extension, we can now see that for Machiavelli indigenous builders must be free categorically, since the issue of their dependence on an alien agent does not arise.

In the case of free outsiders building cities, this class of people is subdivided by Machiavelli into two further groups: those people, for instance the Israelites under Moses, who "inhabit the cities that they find in the regions [*paesi*] that they acquire [*acquistano*]," and those, such as the Romans under Aeneas, who "build new ones." Now both these types of people are, in a sense, imperialists. Although Machiavelli sees all outsiders who found cities as refugees, "forced by pestilence, famine, or war to abandon the homeland," their continued survival seems to require the *acquisition* of a new territory in the face of any peoples currently inhabiting that territory.[504] Once the invading people have entered the region, they can either settle in pre-

[503] *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8.

[504] "Sono liberi gli edificatori delle cittadi, quando alcuni popoli, o sotto uno principe o da per sé, sono constretti, o per morbo o per fame o per guerra, a abbandonare il paese patrio, e cercasi nuova sede: questi tali, o egli abitano le cittadi che e' truovono ne' paesi ch' egli acquistano, come fe' Moises; o e' ne edificano di nuovo, come fe' Enea." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8.

existing cities or build their own. Since Moses-type foundations do not actually involve building a city,[505] Machiavelli does not choose to dwell on this process here. Instead, he is interested in the alternative case of outsiders founding a city *ex nihilo*, as here "we can discern the *virtú* of the builder and the *fortuna* of what is built."[506]

Machiavelli connects the *fortuna* of this kind of city with the degree of *virtú* "of the one who gave it its start." The founder's *virtú* is discernible in "the selection of site" and "the drawing up of laws."[507] Since, as we have noted, Machiavelli is concerned to quarantine for analysis the material conditions of state-formation in this chapter, saving his more sustained treatment of the state's constitutional and legislative shaping for following discourses, he does not go into any real detail here about the type of laws that a virtuous founder might lay down for a city. His focus instead is on the virtue associated with choosing a site. This is a virtue that cannot be shown by indigenous founders, as these people simply build cities in their place of origin; nor can it be shown by dependent builders of cities, since they are not free to choose where to build their colonies. The choice is available only to the Aeneas-type foreign founder, and it involves deciding whether it is more virtuous to build cities in barren or fertile places. To see which choice a founder should make involves reflecting on human behavioural psychology, and setting it against a given region's productive capacity. Machiavelli notes that as "men act

[505] Machiavelli seems to have in mind Numbers 32.33–42. See in particular 32.39–40: "And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it. And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein." KJV.

[506] "In questo caso è dove si conosce la virtú dello edificatore, e la fortuna dello edificato." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8. I take "questo caso" to refer to the Aeneas-type foundation.

[507] "La quale è piú o meno maravigliosa, secondo che piú o meno è virtuoso colui che ne è stato principio. La virtú del quale si conosce in duo modi: il primo è nella elezione del sito; l'altro nella ordinazione delle leggi." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8.

either by necessity or by choice and because we find that there is greater *virtú* where choice has less influence," it would seem that barren places provide the best candidates for city foundations. As the people transplanted to such places would be required to work hard eking out a living, they "would live more united, having, because of the barrenness of the site, less cause for discords."[508] It seems, then, that the more opportunities a site provides for material acquisition, the greater the risk of social conflict. Poverty, on the other hand, appears to breed social cohesion, since the sources of social conflict, namely material goods, are limited. But Machiavelli, as is typical of his rhetorical procedure, presents a seemingly attractive option only to withdraw it:

> That choice would doubtless be wiser and more practical [*utile*] if men were content to live on their own and were not intent on seeking to command others. Therefore, because men can find safety [*assicurarsi*] only through power, it is necessary to avoid barren regions and settle in very fertile places where, since the fertility of the site enables them to expand [*ampliare*], they can both defend themselves from whoever attacks them and crush [*opprimere*] anyone who challenges their greatness.[509]

This is an extraordinarily important passage for our understanding of Machiavelli's theory of empire. If we reverse Machiavelli's contrary-to-fact statement, then we have to conclude that, in his view, men are *not* content to live on their own and *are* intent on seeking to command others.

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[508] "E perché gli uomini operono o per necessità o per elezione; e perché si vede quivi essere maggior virtú dove la elezione ha meno autorità, è da considerare se sarebbe meglio eleggere, per la edificazione delle cittadi, luoghi sterili, acciocché gli uomini, constretti a industriarsi, meno occupati dall'ozio, vivessono piú uniti, avendo, per la povertà del sito, minore cagione di discordie." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8.

[509] "La quale elezione sarebbe sanza dubbio piú savia e piú utile, quando gli uomini fossero contenti a vivere del loro, e non volessono cercare di comandare altrui. Pertanto, non potendo gli uomini assicurarsi se non con la potenza, è necessario fuggire questa sterilità del paese, e porsi in luoghi fertilissimi; dove, potendo per la ubertà del sito ampliare, possa e difendersi da chi l'assaltasse e opprimere qualunque alla grandezza sua si opponesse." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 9.

This is not necessarily to say, however, that men seek to command others *by nature*. Although we are not seeing the full picture here, when we come to Book Two of the *Discorsi* we will find that the desire to command seems to be instrumental to the desire to acquire, which certainly is a natural desire; humans seek to command others not because commanding is itself an end, but because harnessing the productive capacities of others is a way for those who dominate to increase their material possessions.

What is important to note here is that Machiavelli thinks the state's material foundation should provide for its future expansion. His point about the necessity of establishing the state on a productive agricultural base is both poetic and philosophical: the state's roots should be planted in the most productive soil, since the potential for growth present in nature will, if cultivated correctly, be translated into the growth of the state. It is important to underline Machiavelli's departure here from the Platonic and Aristotelian position that the state should be a self-sufficient and self-containing entity.[510] In particular, Platonic moral and political philosophy had set itself the goal of mitigating the natural yet unwelcome excesses of a passion-ridden human subject, including the drive to acquire others' possessions through waging war against them.[511] Machiavelli's naturalism is, then, remarkable; rather than pit his political philosophy against the most basic human passions and desires, he in fact builds it around them.

It is important to observe this point as doing so should disabuse us of any notion that when Machiavelli advocates imperial expansion for the republic, he does so for purely defensive

[510] Plat. *Rep*. 372e–374a and 422a–423c; Aristot. *Pol*. 1324b–1327b and 1333b–1334a. William Connell also notes the contrast between the Machiavellian and Platonic-Aristotelian views: Connell, "Growth as an End," 263.

[511] See especially Plat. *Phaedo* 66c–d.

considerations; on the contrary, Machiavelli's views on human nature show that the expansionist impulse is hardwired into his theory of the free state. Founders should therefore be concerned not only with providing security (*assicurarsi*) for their fledgling states, but also with finding means whereby they can, in time, crush (*opprimere*) those who stand in the way of their greatness (*grandezza*).[512] We can thus summarize Machiavelli's thinking about the human calculation underlying the state's origins: other peoples' acquisitive desires will lead them to try to take your possessions and command you, but you are of course also such a person, and therefore you will want to take their possessions and command them; on both counts, entering into the state will leave you in a better position than you were in nature. It is true that when we saw him working at his most abstracted theoretical level in 1.2, Machiavelli located the state's origins in a collective human response to provide for defense. But when he is examining its more concrete foundations here in 1.1, he reveals that if the state is to be aligned correctly with human nature, then it must be constructed in such a way that it can not only repel, but also project acquisitive desire.

This dual function of the state, and particularly the *free* state, is further evident in a letter Machiavelli sent to Francesco Vettori on 10 August 1513, around the time he was settling down to write *Il Principe*. Machiavelli was replying to a letter in which Vettori had proposed the two of them put Italy in order and "arrange a peace with the pen."[513] When discussing the Swiss's role in Italy's current geopolitics, Machiavelli asks his friend to "consider men's affairs in a credible way, and consider the powers of the world, and especially republics, as things that grow

[512] I discuss on pp. 216–17 below Machiavelli's conception of *grandezza*.

[513] "Voi m'assettassi colla penna una pace." Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. 2, ed. Vivanti, 270. On this exchange of letters, see Roberto Ridolfi, *The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli*, trans. C. Grayson (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963), 146–47.

[*creschino*]; and see that men first find it enough to defend themselves and not to be mastered [*dominato*] by others; after this they want to injure [*offendere*] and master [*dominare*] others."[514] Machiavelli goes on to describe the Swiss's increasingly successful military exploits and the corresponding growth in their foreign ambitions; indeed, their desires seem predictably insatiable. Given this, Machiavelli warns that the Swiss must be checked before they can "put down roots" in Italy and "taste the sweetness of ruling." If this were to happen, then Italy would be wrecked, since "all the malcontents would favour them and make them a ladder for their own greatness and the ruin of others."[515] As we saw, Machiavelli develops this point in *Il Principe* 3, but reversing his viewpoint to observe how an imperial invader might climb such a ladder into a foreign province. And the thought will also reappear in *Discorsi* 2.1, where Machiavelli notes that the Romans always ensured they found a "friend" who could serve as "a ladder or a door" into other peoples' provinces, or supply a means of holding them. In the letter to Vettori, Machiavelli is concerned not only about the Swiss becoming an entry point into Italy for other hostile powers, but also about the threat the Swiss themselves pose, precisely because they constitute a well-armed *free* state and one which is beginning to look ominously neo-Roman.[516] The connection between freedom and imperial growth is emerging more clearly here; men—and

[514] "Voi consideriate le cose degl'huomini come l'esser creduto e le potenzie del mondo, e massime della repubblica, come le creschino; et vedrete come agl'uomini prima basta potere difendere se medesimo e non esser dominato da altri; da questo si sale poi a offendere altri et a volere dominare altri." Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. 2, ed. Vivanti, 278.

[515] "E remedii a questa piena bisogna farli ora, avanti che si abbarbino in questo stato, e che comincino a gustare la dolcezza del dominare … tutti e malcontenti li favoriranno e faranno scala alla loro grandezza, et alla ruina d'altri." Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. 2, ed. Vivanti, 279

[516] Machiavelli notes an anecdote that the Swiss were boasting that the "*virtú* of their militia" was like the Romans and that one day they might do as the Romans did. Machiavelli concludes that "one needs to be exceedingly afraid of them." Machiavelli, *Opere*, vol. 2, ed. Vivanti, 278.

republics—first seek to secure freedom from domination, then they seek to dominate others. What is missing from these passages written for Vettori is the philosophical bedrock on which such a view might be supported, and, as we have seen, Machiavelli will provide this in the *Discorsi* with his account of acquisitive human nature.

To return to *Discorsi* 1.1 and the typology of state founders, Machiavelli rounds of the discussion by noting that determining who was responsible for giving Rome its material foundation is a moot point: whether the city was built by people under Aeneas (a foreigner) or under Romulus (a native), Rome had a "free beginning, not depending on anyone."[517] As will become increasingly plain below, this fact is important because cities that start life free are free to grow. The opposite is true for those cities with dependent foundations, and it is worth concluding this examination of Machiavelli's thoughts on the state's origins with the brief treatment he gives here of states which begin their lives in a state of external dependency.

Machiavelli notes that dependent cities are founded for one of three reasons. Some are built by princes who simply want to glorify themselves, but the more interesting cases are colonial foundations. Colonies are sent out by both republics and princes to ease demographic pressures, or "to defend a newly acquired country which they want to hold onto securely and without expense."[518] This last colonial strategy is particularly revealing since it presupposes that a prince or a republic has already embarked on a program of imperial acquisition; the colony is born into a world that is being imperialized, and it is born solely to further this process. This type

[517] "Avere principio libero, sanza dependere da alcuno." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 10.

[518] "Per difesa di quel paese che, di nuovo acquistato, vogliono sicuramente e sanza ispesa mantenersi." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8.

of colony is therefore most obviously a product of acquisitive desire. But the overarching point Machiavelli wants to make here is that since all dependent cities "do not have … their origins in freedom, it rarely turns out that they go very far and can be numbered among the capitals of kingdoms."[519] Machiavelli illustrates this observation with Roman Florence. Whether Florence was built in Sulla's time or during the Augustan peace, the city "was built under the Roman empire and could not, at the beginning, undertake any growth other than that granted to it by the generosity of the *principe*."[520] Whereas both Salutati and the young Bruni had been at pains to demonstrate that Florence's foundation dated to the republican phase of Roman history, Machiavelli's theory renders his predecessors' historiographical arguments an irrelevance, since Florence was unquestionably founded under the restricting *imperio* of a *principe*. That *principe* may have been Augustus or, crucially, the *popolo Romano.* Here we see for the first of many times in the *Discorsi* that Machiavelli conceptualizes the Roman people as a *principe* in relation to its dependent subjects.

Machiavelli will later explain in *Discorsi* 1.49 that Florence's "servile origin" (*principio ... servo*) has enduring consequences. Even when Florence was finally able "to breathe" and "started to create its own institutions [*ordini*]"—it seems after the death of Frederick II in 1250––the city's long history of servitude, which began under Rome and was then perpetuated by its medieval lords, means that its legal and institutional architecture remains compromised; Machiavelli even goes as far as saying that Florence has never succeeded in establishing "a state

[519] "Per non avere queste cittadi la loro origine libera, rade volte occorre che le facciano processi grandi, e possinsi intra i capi dei regni numerare." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8.

[520] "Si edificò sotto l'imperio romano: né poté, ne' principii suoi, fare altri augumenti che quelli che per cortesia del principe gli erano concessi." *Discorsi* 1.1, p. 8.

which could truly be called a republic." And he adds that these difficulties faced by Florence "have always existed in all cities with such origins."[521] When we come to examine more closely the Roman Republic's foreign policy in Book Two of the *Discorsi*, we shall see that, since the extension of the *popolo Romano*'s liberty entailed the mass subjection—and ultimately imperial incorporation—of other free Italian peoples, Machiavelli's Italy is still suffering the enslaving effects of ancient Roman *libertas*. While the *Discorsi*, then, is explicitly a meditation on the free state, it is also a study fixed on the state that is, from the beginning, free to grow. Machiavelli thus announces in 1.2 that he will "put to one side those cities that were subjected to others from the outset and discuss those cities that had their origins far from any external servitude [*servitú esterna*] … [and] immediately governed themselves as they chose [*governate per loro arbitro*], either as republics or principalities."[522] Nevertheless, as he elaborates his theory of empire, dependent cities will come to figure as increasingly prominent features in Machiavelli's imperial landscape.

III. GROWTH: CONSTITUTING THE REPUBLIC

We have now progressed from Machiavelli's conception of the natural human subject to his account of the embryonic forms of the state, and I have argued that acquisitive desire is

[521] "Venuta la occasione di respirare, cominciò a fare suoi ordini; i quali sendo mescolati con gli antichi, che erano cattivi, non poterono essere buoni: e cosí è ita maneggiandosi per dugento anni … sanza avere mai avuto stato per il quale la possa veramente essere chiamata republica. E queste difficultà che sono state in lei, sono state sempre in tutte quelle città che hanno avuto i principii simili a lei." *Discorsi* 1.49, p. 107.

[522] "Io voglio porre da parte il ragionare di quelle cittadi che hanno avuto il loro principio sottoposto a altrui; e parlerò di quelle che hanno avuto il principio lontano da ogni servitú esterna, ma si sono subito governate per loro arbitrio, o come republiche o come principato." *Discorsi* 1.2, p. 10.

foundational to his approach in both areas; indeed, it is in their collective response to the pressures of acquisitive desire that humans move from the world of nature into the world of states. I now want to consider the differing ways in which this desire displays itself within the varying forms that the state may take as it continues to develop. Machiavelli clearly does not believe that acquisitive desire can be eliminated from human life, yet he does think that state structures have the power to mitigate, amplify, and redirect it; in doing so, states help determine their imperial futures. As we shall see, the contrast between what acquisitive desire can do in the hands of a *principe* and a *popolo* is particularly stark, but I want to examine first the different roles it can be made to play in two alternative types of republic: the republic that seeks only to maintain itself, and the one that "wants to make an empire."[523]

Machiavelli notes in *Discorsi* 2.1 that "if there is nowhere to be found a republic that has made the gains that Rome did, that is because there cannot be found a republic that was organized to be able to acquire like Rome."[524] Although, as we shall examine more closely in the following section, Machiavelli thinks that *all* free states are naturally inclined to seek both to preserve their liberty and to acquire things, he considers the Roman Republic, by virtue of its tumultuous politics, to have been particularly devoted to imperial expansion: "Rome had as its ends [*fine*] empire and glory, and not tranquility."[525] In connecting in Book Two Rome's imperial exceptionalism with its constitutional arrangement, Machiavelli is referring us back to

[523] "O tu ragioni d'una republica che voglia fare uno imperio, come Roma, o d'una che le basti mantenersi." *Discorsi* 1.5, pp. 19–20.

[524] "Se non si è trovata mai republica che abbi fatti i profitti che Roma, è nato che non si è trovata mai republica che sia stata ordinata a potere acquistare come Roma." *Discorsi* 2.1, p. 135.

[525] "Roma per fine lo imperio e la gloria, e non la quiete." *Discorsi* 2.9, p. 157.

the early chapters of Book One, in which he had claimed that civil disunion kept the republic not only free, but also *growing*. We therefore need to consider how Machiavelli's argument in this section of Book One helps undergird his more developed thoughts on empire in Book Two.

Machiavelli conceptualizes states as entities composed of two different social classes, or two *umori diversi*: the *popolo* and the *grandi.*[526] These two groups embody two appetites or desires: the *popolo* wants to avoid oppression and domination by the *grandi*, and the *grandi* want to oppress and dominate the *popolo*. We can observe this basic picture of the state's social dynamics in *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi*.[527] But in the later text Machiavelli adds a further layer to his analysis, as here we find that both classes have acquisitive desires, and ones which only the free state can truly feed. In *Discorsi* 1.5 Machiavelli tells us that, whereas the *grandi* have "a great desire to dominate," in the *popolo* there is "only the desire not to be dominated."[528] This has led some scholars to claim that Machiavelli thinks republican imperialism is driven solely by the domineering desires of the *grandi*.[529] But this is to overlook a crucial point which emerges in this chapter. While the desire to dominate within the state is to be associated with the *grandi*, the desire to acquire things, including the instruments of governmental power, is shared by both social classes. Rome provides an instructive example: once the plebs had gained some authority through the creation of the tribunate, they only wanted more, demanding another plebian consul,

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[526] See Stacey, "Free and Unfree States," 183. Machiavelli also labels these groups *ignobili* and *nobili*, but for simplicity's sake I stick with *popolo* and *grandi* in what follows.

[527] *Il Principe* 9 and *Discorsi* 1.4–5. Cf. Machiavelli's comments in *Del modo* on those "who *serve* and those who *comanda*."

[528] "Se si considerrà il fine de' nobili e degli ignobili, si vedrà in quelli desiderio grande di dominare, ed in questi solo desiderio di non essere dominati." *Discorsi* 1.5, p. 19.

[529] McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy*, 36–61; Hörnqvist, "Machiavelli's Three Desires," 27.

the censorship, the praetorship, and "all the other grades of *imperio*."[530] Indeed, Machiavelli notes it was the plebs' incessant desire to wrestle power from the nobility that eventually led to the breakdown of legitimate government at Rome and the end of liberty. Under the right political conditions, the *popolo* thus displays a boundless desire to amass whatever resources it can in order to improve its position with respect to the *grandi*. This should not surprise us now that we have observed Machiavelli's commitment in the *Discorsi* to view human appetites as naturally insatiable. The desires of the *popolo* and the *grandi*, then, do not actually differ by nature; it is simply that the common human desire to acquire things manifests into two different classes, with competing political objectives, when it is set within the social context the state provides: the *popolo* wants to acquire things it does not have, whereas the *grandi* want to hold on to things they do have *and* to acquire more things, since "it does not seem to men that a man can possess securely that which he has unless he acquires more from others."[531] Once we see this, we will appreciate that Machiavelli's class-based analysis of the desires to dominate and to avoid domination applies only to life *within* the state; when the *grandi* and *popolo* turn their attention to the outside world, members of both classes will exhibit the natural human desire to acquire things, and, in pursuing their desires, may seek to dominate foreign peoples. When they move beyond the boundary of the state, then, the desires of the *grandi* and *popolo* do not appear to be so different. Indeed, Machiavelli suggests that class distinctions often go into abeyance when a

[530] "Ei vollono la censura, il pretore, e tutti gli altri gradi dell'imperio della città." *Discorsi* 1.5, p. 19.

[531] "Non pare agli uomini possedere sicuramente quello che l'uomo ha, se non si acquista di nuovo dell'altro." *Discorsi* 1.5, p. 20.

republic is occupied with foreign affairs: "most of the time the cause of disunity in republics is idleness and peace, the cause of unity is fear and war."[532]

The choice for constitutional theorists is to decide how power within the republic should be distributed between the *grandi* and the *popolo*. In determining which group should be handed the institutionalized responsibility of preserving the state's freedom, Machiavelli recommends that a republic which wishes simply to "maintain itself" (*le basti mantenersi*) should imitate Sparta and Venice and entrust the guardianship of liberty to the *grandi*. But if a republic "wants to make an empire" (*voglia fare uno imperio*), then it is necessary to model itself on Rome and give the responsibility to the *popolo*.[533] Although it is unlikely that Machiavelli thinks the *popolo* in a state like Sparta or Venice is dominated by the *grandi*, since, strictly speaking, this would be to admit that its members are unfree, he does seem to suggest that the *popolo* in a state like Rome has a more expansive space in which to exercise its freedom, and it is this condition which must be met if a republic is to develop its capacity to dominate other states and deprive them of their liberty. Continuing in this line of argument, Machiavelli proposes that the *popolo*'s acquisitive appetites are indulged. In 1.6 the Roman model, which allocates the *popolo* a large role in the state, emerges as definitively superior to that of Sparta and Venice, more aristocratic republics in which power is skewed towards the *grandi*. Not only are the Spartan and Venetian peoples denied political power in the form of a dedicated popular office, such as the tribunate, but each republic also establishes constitutional principles which have restricting effects on the *popolo*:

[532] "La cagione della disunione delle republiche il piú delle volte è l'ozio e la pace, la cagione della unione è la paura e la guerra." *Discorsi* 2.25, p. 205.

[533] *Discorsi* 1.5, pp. 19–20.

Sparta refused to admit foreigners, thereby preventing its *popolo* from increasing, while Venice declined to militarize its plebs, and so its *popolo* remained weak. Rome, however, did both and in doing so "gave the plebs strength, increasing numbers, and infinite opportunities for tumults."[534] So whereas the Spartan and Venetian constitutions work to blunt the *popolo*'s desire for acquisition, Rome's allows it to grow acute. The Spartan-Venetian model thus yields a quiet, tranquil, and united state, but because it enervates the *popolo*, it also creates a weak state which will struggle to maintain an empire: "if you keep it [i.e. the *popolo*] either small or unarmed in order to control it, then should you acquire *dominio*, you cannot hold it, or the *popolo* becomes so weak that you fall prey to anyone who attacks you."[535] Rome, on the other hand, may have been noisy, tumultuous, and disunited, but it was strong when it faced up to other states because of its strong *popolo*.

The choice, then, might appear—as it did to some theorists in early modern England—to be between adopting a constitution like the Spartan-Venetian which prolongs a state's liberty, or one such as Rome's which extends its *imperio*.[536] But this choice is in fact not such a dilemma, as by the end of the chapter Machiavelli has severed the link between non-expansion and longevity. He observes that, since "human affairs are ever in flux and cannot remain stable," a republic which has been designed only to maintain itself may be forced by necessity to expand, which, as it will be unprepared for empire, will fatally undermine it. Moreover, even in the

[534] "Il che dette alla plebe forze ed augumento, ed infinite occasioni di tumultuare." *Discorsi* 1.6, p. 23.

[535] "Se tu lo mantieni o piccolo o disarmato per poter maneggiarlo, se tu acquisti dominio, non lo puoi tenere, o ei diventa sí vile che tu sei preda di qualunque ti assalta." *Discorsi* 1.6, p. 23.

[536] See David Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, 125–45; Armitage, "Empire and Liberty: A Republican Dilemma." See also Geoff Kennedy, "The 'Republican Dilemma' and the Changing Social Context of Republicanism in the Early Modern Period," *European Journal of Political Theory* 8.3 (2019): 313–38.

unlikely event that a republic can avoid warfare altogether, "idleness would render it either unmanly or divided; these two things, either in conjunction or singly, would cause its ruin."[537] The republic that resists the imperial urge and seeks only to maintain itself therefore digs its own grave, since the contingency of politics will not leave it undisturbed forever, or even for very long. Again, Machiavelli's ultimate rejection of the non-expansionist republican model can easily be read as a repudiation of the Platonic-Aristotelian vision of the self-sufficient *polis*; the free state has the best chance of staying free when it is conditioned for imperial expansion. Machiavelli thus concludes that "it is necessary to follow the Roman organization, and not that of other republics."[538] By the end of 1.6, Machiavelli has revealed that this particular dilemma of liberty and empire to be false, a point which we will see him reinforcing in Book Two.[539]

For Machiavelli, then, there is a strong prudential argument for ensuring that states, and particularly states which wish to remain free, have the capacity to enlarge their *imperio*. But Machiavelli also indicates that he believes there is some intrinsic value in creating an empire: "it is necessary to consider the most honourable courses [*le parte piú onorevole*] in organizing a republic and to arrange them in such a way that if ever necessity induced it to expand it could keep what it had occupied."[540] Quite what Machiavelli means by "*le parte piú onorevole*" is

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[537] "Sendo tutte le cose degli uomini in moto, e non potendo stare salde, conviene che le salghino o che le scendino; e a molte cose che la ragione non t'induce, t'induce la necessità: talmente che, avendo ordinata una republica atta a mantenersi, non ampliando, e la necessità la conducesse ad ampliare, si verrebbe a tor via i fondamenti suoi, ed a farla rovinare piú tosto. Così, dall'altra parte, quando il Cielo le fusse sì benigno che la non avesse a fare guerra, ne nascerebbe che l'ozio la farebbe o effeminata o divisa; le quali due cose insieme, o ciascuna per sé, sarebbono cagione della sua rovina." *Discorsi* 1.6, p. 24.

[538] "Credo ch'e' sia necessario seguire l'ordine romano, e non quello dell'altre republiche." *Discorsi* 1.6, p. 25.

[539] *Discorsi* 2.19, p. 186.

[540] "Pertanto, non si potendo, come io credo, bilanciare questa cosa, né mantenere questa via del mezzo a punto; bisogna, nello ordinare la republica, pensare alle parte piú onorevole, ed ordinarle in modo, che, quando

unclear,[541] but it is highly significant, I think, that he shows a concern to moralize imperial acquisition in this way. Given his views on the insatiable acquisitiveness of human nature, Machiavelli's theory would seem to dictate that organizing a republic only to maintain itself is not just imprudent, but also in some sense *unnatural*; the state's artifice should work with, not against, its natural components. As Machiavelli will later explain in 1.29, "a city that lives free has two ends [*fine*], one is to acquire, the other is to keep itself free."[542] Republics which are constituted like Sparta and Venice are thus directed away from their true ends: by attempting to avoid imperial expansion they endanger, not maintain, their liberty and deny their acquisitive nature. It turns out that what is necessary and natural for Machiavelli is what deserves to be considered moral.

IV. GROWTH: PRINCES AND PEOPLES

In the *Discorsi* at least, Machiavelli holds the view that, at the most fundamental level, the natures of princes and peoples are essentially the same.[543] He notes in 1.58 that when we see a prince and a people behaving differently, the cause is not their having a "different nature, since it

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pure la necessità le inducesse ad ampliare, elle potessono, quello ch'elle avessono occupato, conservare." *Discorsi* 1.6, p. 24.

[541] Pocock speculates that Machiavelli may have been acknowledging that "the pre-Christian citizen preferred glory to length of days, even to *buon governo* and the pursuit of justice and felicity." Pocock, *The First Decline and Fall*, 210.

[542] "Avendo una città che vive libera, duoi fini, l'uno lo acquistare, l'altro il mantenersi libera." *Discorsi* 1.29, p. 70.

[543] Machiavelli observes in *Il Principe*'s dedication that one needs to view the "natura" of peoples and princes from differing perspectives; his metaphor would suggest their respective natures vary as far as plains differ from mountains. *Il Principe*, *dedica*, p. 5.

is the same in all men," but how far and in what way each is regulated by laws. Machiavelli does, however, complicate the picture somewhat by adding that "if there is greater [natural] good it is in the people."[544] And he goes on to assert that the prince's *passioni* are "more intense than those of the people;" indeed, "a prince who can do what he wants is mad; a people that can do what it wants is unwise."[545] But the basic point stands: all humans have natural desires which are liable to run amok if left unchecked by laws and other artificial constraints. What Machiavelli wants to argue is that while princes are better at creating the institutions which can impose some order on human desires, the people is "far better at maintaining what has been established."[546] And with a viable republican constitution up and running, and the monarchical founders removed, a free people will also prove itself superior to the prince at extending empire. As Machiavelli puts it, "cities where the people are princes quickly make enormous growth, much greater than those always under a prince."[547]

Machiavelli will treat this topic more thoroughly in *Discorsi* 2.2, but in Book One he gives an important procedural reason to help explain why well-ordered republican constitutions enable the creation of grander empires: free suffrage, when uncorrupted, places the power of military command in the hands of only the most capable citizens. While Rome was a monarchy,

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[544] "La variazione del procedere loro nasce non dalla natura diversa, perché in tutti è a un modo, e se vi è vantaggio di bene, è nel popolo." *Discorsi* 1.58, pp. 125–26.

[545] "Molte volte erra ancora un principe nelle sue proprie passioni, le quali sono molte piú che quelle de' popoli … un principe che può fare ciò ch'ei vuole, è pazzo; un popolo che può fare ciò che vuole, non è savio." *Discorsi* 1.58, pp. 126–27.

[546] "Se i principi sono superiori a' popoli nello ordinare leggi, formare vite civili, ordinare statuti ed ordini nuovi; i popoli sono tanto superiori nel mantenere le cose ordinate, ch'egli aggiungono sanza dubbio alla gloria di coloro che l'ordinano." *Discorsi* 1.58, p. 127.

[547] "Le città, dove i popoli sono principi, fare in brevissimo tempo augumenti eccessivi, e molto maggiori che quelle che sempre sono state sotto uno principe." *Discorsi* 1.58, p. 126.

Machiavelli notes in 1.19, "it ran the risk of coming to ruin under either a weak or a wicked king."[548] If Rome had suffered a succession of weak rulers, "the city would have become effeminate and prey to its neighbors." It was in fact only down to the "greatest fortune" that two of Rome's first three kings happened to be warlike. Machiavelli may be guilty here of glossing over the elective character of Roman monarchy as described by Livy, but his point is obvious enough and he spells it out in the following chapter: the freedom to vote breaks the precariousness of monarchy by ensuring that the strongest candidates are elected into office. The Roman Republic's free elections provided for a succession of virtuous office holders, which, combined with its good fortune, allowed Rome to reach its "*ultima grandezza*," a greatness which involved, according to this chapter's title, "acquisitions and enlargements."[549] Not only does a well-functioning electoral system ensure that only the virtuous are put into office, it also allows a republic to select among a large pool of individuals of varying character. Since, as we have observed, Machiavelli thinks human character is relatively inflexible, a republic's ability to choose, we might say, the right man for the job is extremely useful, particularly when it is at war.[550] Machiavelli notes in 3.9 that, in defeating Carthage in the Second Punic War (218–01 BCE), Rome could draw on both the natural cautiousness of a Fabius and the natural audacity of a Scipio according to the conflict's shifting exigencies. This advantage means that "the republic

[548] "Altrimenti quella città sarebbe diventata effeminata, e preda de' suoi vicini." *Discorsi* 1.19, p. 57.

[549] *Discorsi* 1.20, p. 58.

[550] Nederman, "Machiavelli and Moral Character," 361–63.

has a longer life and has good fortune longer than a principality;" in other words, it is better suited to surviving and flourishing in a world of hostile states.[551]

As Machiavelli observes elsewhere, the connection between free suffrage, *virtú*, and imperial expansion lasted in Roman politics until the republic's arms had brought virtually the entire Mediterranean world to heel:

> After the Romans conquered Africa and Asia and reduced almost all Greece to obedience [*ubbidienza*], they became sure of their freedom and thought they no longer had any enemies to fear. This assurance and the enemies' weakness made the Roman people in bestowing the consular office seek not *virtú* but the ability to ingratiate people [*grazia*], choosing for the office those who knew best how to get along with men, not those who knew best how to defeat enemies.[552]

Before corruption had set in, then, the Roman Republic remained a highly efficient imperial state in large part because the Roman people chose to give *imperio* to the most promising military commanders. It was, however, Rome's imperial success itself which led to the electoral process becoming perverted. We shall need to consider later Machiavelli's analysis of the relationship between empire and corruption, but for now it is simply worth stating that we should not be content to label his account "Sallustian." While both Sallust and Machiavelli draw connections between liberty and imperial growth and between empire and corruption, we need to see that the

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[551] "Una republica ha maggiore vita, ed ha piú lungamente buona fortuna, che uno principato, perché la può meglio accomodarsi alla diversità de' temporali, per la diversità de' cittadini che sono in quella, che non può uno principe." *Discorsi* 3.9, p. 257.

[552] "Avendo i Romani domata l'Africa e l'Asia, e ridotta quasi tutta la Grecia a sua ubbidienza, erano divenuti sicuri della libertà loro, né pareva loro avere piú nimici che dovessono fare loro paura. Questa sicurtà e questa debolezza de' nimici fece che il popolo romano, nel dare il consolato, non riguardava piú la virtú, ma la grazia; tirando a quel grado quelli che meglio sapevano intrattenere gli uomini, non quelli che sapevano meglio vincere i nimici." *Discorsi* 1.18, pp. 54–55.

central and enduring role which Machiavelli gives to insatiable acquisitive desire means that his theory is at once more philosophically grounded and more clear-eyed than the Roman author's theoretically rather underdeveloped remarks.

We have been observing that Machiavelli thinks the way in which the principality is formally constituted—particularly when it is a hereditary monarchy—means it necessarily tends to be a less effective imperial power, and one more subject to *fortuna*, than the republic. It is possible of course that a principality comes to be ruled by a warlike prince such as Romulus, or even an exceptional empire builder like Alexander, but it is highly improbable that a princely state will be fortunate enough to enjoy a succession of expansionist princes. Although all humans share the insatiable desire to acquire things, qualities of character which vary among individuals affect how far that desire is able to manifest itself; having an appetite to acquire is not the same as having the stomach for empire, and it is therefore simply a matter of luck for a state to come under the rule of a prince whose character allows him to indulge his acquisitive desires in an imperial project. However, Machiavelli has a more profound explanation for why principalities, regardless of their rulers' *virtú*, are more static, conservative political entities, and why republics are more dynamic and acquisitive ones. As we saw in *Il Principe* 3, Machiavelli certainly thinks that it is natural for princes, along with everyone else, to want to acquire things, but the desire of a single prince will necessarily be less intense than the compounded desires of an entire *popolo.*

In *Discorsi* 1.29 Machiavelli adds another explanation for why princes tend to be less effective imperialists than peoples. Humans are naturally ambitious and suspecting, but princes are particularly suspicious of their military commanders who, in increasing the prince's *imperio*, gain for themselves glory and reputation. Because of their natural suspicion, princes will always

be ungrateful, even murderously hostile, to those who make "great acquisitions" (*grandi acquisti*) on their behalf. The people too can fail to reward the citizens who extend its *imperio*, but it seems to do so—and here we are coming close to the bottom of Machiavelli's distinction between the imperial prince and the imperial republic—for a different reason. As we saw, Machiavelli explains in this chapter that the free city has two ends: to maintain its liberty and to acquire, and he notes that "it is bound to err in both matters through excessive ardor."[553] This begs the question: what are the ends of the city that lives in a state of unfreedom? Strictly speaking, Machiavelli does not seem to think that the unfree city can have its own ends; we can only speak of the ends of its *principe*. We shall examine in a moment what a people's ends will be when it is the *principe* of a foreign city, but what does the prince himself hope to achieve by holding his city, as he must, in an unfree state? As we noted in the previous chapter, Machiavelli seems to indicate in *Il Principe* that princely rule involves, above all, *maintaining* the state; adding further cities and provinces to his state is to the prince at most a matter of secondary importance. When the people, then, is ungrateful to those who enlarge its *imperio*, it is succumbing to an excessive and misdirected desire to remain free and acquire things. But when the prince does so, he is simply betraying his anxiety that someone will take from him something that he already has, namely his grip on the state. The people's appetite for both liberty and empire is thus larger than that of the prince.

This point is thrown into the sharpest relief in *Discorsi* 2.2, a chapter which is often held to contain Machiavelli's most complete statement of his conception of liberty. Machiavelli opens the chapter by noting how much the ancients loved their liberty and how difficult this fact made

[553] "Conviene che nell'una cosa e nell'altra per troppo amore erri." *Discorsi* 1.29, p. 70.

it for the Romans to "subjugate" (*soggiogati*) both the peoples around them and those further afield. He also observes that ancient history shows "what harm servitude wreaked on peoples and cities," thus preparing us for a discussion of freedom and slavery in an explicitly imperial context.[554] Machiavelli begins by focusing on the presence of liberty and servitude inside the state, drawing a contrast between states ruled by the people and those under a prince. He points out that virtually all the ancient peoples of Italy were highly allergic to monarchy, before explaining why people in general have such a strong "affection for the free life" (*affezione del vivere libero*). According to Machiavelli, people want to live freely—and this really does need to be underscored—because only free cities *grow*: "cities have never increased in either dominion or wealth except while they are free."[555] When a monarchical figure abolishes free life in a city, its "growth in power and wealth" comes to a stop; in fact, it starts to reverse. And even a virtuoso tyrant who succeeds in lengthening the reach of his own dominion does not increase by one shred the *dominio* of the city or territory he rules: "he alone, not his *patria*, profits from his acquisitions."[556] As we have noted, it is the republic, not the prince (virtuoso or otherwise), that is best equipped to expand; in the free state, imperial expansion expresses the acquisitive desire, not of a single individual, but of an entire people. The experiences of Athens and particularly

[554] "Conoscesi ancora nella lezione delle istorie, quali danni i popoli e le città ricevino per la servitú." *Discorsi* 2.2, p. 139.

[555] "E facil cosa è conoscere donde nasca ne' popoli questa affezione del vivere libero: perché si vede per esperienza, le cittadi non avere mai ampliato né di dominio né di ricchezza, se non mentre sono state in libertà." *Discorsi* 2.2, p. 139.

[556] "Al contrario interviene quando vi è uno principe: dove il piú delle volte quello che fa per lui, offende la città, e quello che fa per la città, offende lui. Dimodoché subito che nasce una tirannide sopra uno vivere libero, il manco male che ne resulti a quelle città è non andare piú innanzi, né crescere piú in potenza o in ricchezze; ma il piú delle volte, anzi sempre, interviene loro, che le tornano indietro." *Discorsi* 2.2, pp. 139–40.

Rome demonstrate the stupendous "greatness" (*grandezza*) that cities can reach once they are unshackled from monarchical rule. *Grandezza* is of course a significant term in Machiavelli's theoretical vocabulary.[557] Although here, as elsewhere in the *Discorsi*, it has a quite literal meaning insofar as it describes the 'great' dimensions that the Roman state would take on, Machiavelli also wants to supply *grandezza* with some normative content. As ever, he is concerned that our moral language is tied to the basic reality, such as he sees it, of political life; if it is necessary for a free state to enlarge its *imperio*, since doing so is to align itself with the natural human desire to acquire things, then we must also recognize that it is moral. In the very plainest terms, then, Machiavelli wants to say that it is a great thing to make your state great.

It is true, however, that Machiavelli reasons that free cities are inclined to greatness because it is only republics that provide for the common good, and "the common good is what makes cities great."[558] Now the common good is quite obviously a concept with a distinguished place in histories of moral and political philosophy, but we need to ask what the *bene comune* means to Machiavelli? It is essentially a conglomeration of individual goods that, in a properly functioning free state, will continually succeed in overriding the interests of private individuals or groups of individuals. In this sense the principality can only be an entity opposed to the common good, since the good of each of its inhabitants is subordinated to the interests of a single private individual. But if the common good is a collection of individual goods, then we still need to ask what *are* individual goods? Machiavelli's answer again accounts for his view that humans

[557] See Quentin Skinner, "Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and the Pre-Humanist Origins of Republican Ideas," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, 121–41, at 137–40. Skinner largely downplays the term's imperial significance.

[558] "Non il bene particulare, ma il bene comune è quello che fa grandi le città. E senza dubbio, questo bene comune non è osservato se non nelle republiche." *Discorsi* 2.2, p. 139.

naturally want to acquire and hold on to things. It is worth quoting in full the famous passage from 2.2 in which Machiavelli describes what the free life looks like:

> All lands and provinces everywhere that live free … make enormous gains. For in them one sees larger populations, since marriage is freer and more attractive to men; each one willingly brings into the world the children that he thinks he can provide for, not doubting that he will be deprived of his patrimony, and he knows not only that the children are born free and not in slavery, but that they can become rulers by means of their *virtú*. Wealth can be seen to multiply more greatly … because everyone willingly abounds in things and seeks to acquire those goods that he believes he can enjoy once they are acquired. Consequently, by vying with one another men work towards the private and public welfare: both grow wonderfully.[559]

This passage, which more than any other in Machiavelli's corpus is thought to embody his idea of freedom, is studded with the language of procreating, nourishing, multiplying, acquiring, and growing. When humans are free to pursue their own goods they choose to produce, acquire, and keep the objects of their desire; the free life provides humans—and states—the freedom to grow.

One of Machiavelli's central problems in the *Discorsi*, then, is this: if the free state is above all else a growing state, then what happens to the peoples and states inhabiting the space into which it will want to grow? Unlike the humanists whose ideological defenses of Florentine imperialism we examined earlier, Machiavelli embraces the concept of slavery when turning to this issue; republican liberty in his analysis cannot be disentangled from the *vivere servo*, the life

[559] "Tutte le terre e le provincie che vivono libere in ogni parte … fanno profitti grandissimi. Perché quivi si vede maggiori popoli, per essere e' connubî piú liberi, piú desiderabili dagli uomini: perché ciascuno procrea volentieri quegli figliuoli che crede potere nutrire, non dubitando che il patrimonio gli sia tolto, e ch'ei conosce non solamente che nascono liberi e non schiavi, ma ch'ei possono mediante la virtú loro diventare principi. Veggonvisi le ricchezze multiplicare in maggiore numero, e quelle che vengono dalla cultura, e quelle che vengono dalle arti. Perché ciascuno volentieri multiplica in quella cosa, e cerca di acquistare quei beni che crede, acquistati, potersi godere. Onde ne nasce che gli uomini a gara pensono a' privati e publici commodi; e l'uno e l'altro viene maravigliosamente a crescere." *Discorsi* 2.2, pp. 142–43.

of servitude experienced by all those subjected to princely rule, and by those peoples deprived of their liberty by a republic.[560] Machiavelli's depiction of life under a foreign master follows hot on the heels of his portrayal of *il vivere libero*:

> The opposite of all these things happens in countries that live in slavery; the harder their slavery is, the more they decline from their accustomed well-being. And of all hard slaveries, the hardest is that which subjects you to a republic: first, because it is the longest lasting and one can have less hope of release; second, because the end [*fine*] of the republic is to make its own body grow by exhausting and weakening all other bodies.[561]

We can thus see that, when freed, the *popolo*'s acquisitive desire generates an imperialism which is particularly totalizing; the imperial republic's goal is to absorb into itself the bodies of other peoples and states. We will inspect more closely republican imperial incorporation in the following section, but, for now, it is worth examining how Machiavelli thinks the process differs from the imperial prince's modus operandi. Since princes can only enlarge their own *dominio* and *imperio*, and not that of their state, princely empire does not pose the republican problem of the growing state which encroaches on, and then annihilates, the liberty of other states. Except for oriental despots and other types of "barbarous prince" (*principe barbaro*), Machiavelli thinks that monarchs will generally not favour one city over another and will want to leave intact each city's industrial base (*arti*) and most of its traditional institutions (*ordini antichi*). Indeed, the virtuoso tyrant who is able to acquire foreign cities "cannot subordinate them to or make them

[560] Stacey has forthcoming work on *il vivere servo*.

[561] "Il contrario di tutte queste cose segue in quegli paesi che vivono servi: e tanto piú scemono dal consueto bene, quanto piú è dura la servitú. E di tutte le servitú dure, quella è durissima che ti sottomette a una republica: l'una, perché la è piú durabile, e manco si può sperare d'uscirne; l'altra, perché il fine della republica è enervare ed indebolire per accrescere il corpo suo tutti gli altri corpi." *Discorsi* 2.2, p. 143.

tributary to that city of which he is tyrant, because making it powerful is not in his interests; it is in his interests to hold the state disunited and for each town [*terra*] and each region [*provincia*] to recognize him."[562] While princes, then, cancel the liberty of any free peoples they conquer, they will not normally attempt, like the imperial republic, to eliminate every vestige of free life. Therefore, although the cities a prince subjects "cannot grow like free cities, they are not ruined like slaves," which is precisely the fate of those cities brought under a republic's *imperio*.[563] It is the republic's foreign subjects who suffer the hardest, most destructive form of unfreedom that Machiavelli can imagine.

Machiavelli's remarks here on the typically restrained, even conservative, approach of imperial princes may appear to be in tension with some of his comments in *Il Principe*. As we saw, in *Il Principe* 3 Machiavelli conceptualizes the imperial process as one involving the addition of limb-like states (*membri*) to the princely state's body (*corpo*). But we also saw him observing that a prince can succeed in making the states he acquires "all one body" (*tutto uno corpo*) with his original state. This task, we were told, is far less demanding when the prince acquires states which are located in his home province, and which are not used to living freely. Machiavelli recommends in *Il Principe* 5 that when the prince is attempting to acquire free states, he should go to live in them or, perhaps more realistically, extinguish (*spegnere*) them; he is certainly not advised to preserve their *ordini antichi*. In the most imperial chapters of *Il Principe*, then, Machiavelli's prince is, unlike that of *Discorsi* 2.2, a figure who prudently ruins

[562] "Non può ancora le città che esso acquista sottometterle o farle tributarie a quella città di che egli è tiranno: perché il farla potente non fa per lui, ma per lui fa tenere lo stato disgiunto, e che ciascuna terra e ciascuna provincia riconosca lui." *Discorsi* 2.2, p. 140.

[563] "Se le non possono crescere come libere, elle non rovinano anche come schiave." *Discorsi* 2.2, p. 143.

republics in order to keep them and, crucially, aims to absorb all the other states he acquires into the body of his *stato*.

Machiavelli must think therefore that for both princes and republics empire is ultimately about incorporation. However, he plainly does not think that the process whereby multiple states are made into a single body is identical in its princely and republican modes. Unlike the republic, princes are not driven "to exhaust and weaken" the states they subject. The prince who acquires a republic would in fact do well to ruin it, but, according to what Machiavelli says in *Discorsi* 2.2, he will not be inclined to do so. Moreover, princes have no reason at all to destroy the foreign principalities they acquire; as we saw in *Il Principe* 4, their only aim here is to break and then retie the bonds of command and obedience existing between ruler and people. Strictly speaking, none of the cities a prince incorporates into his state can grow, since any increases in power or wealth in the state belong to him alone. Nonetheless, princes will normally want to leave standing their cities' *arti* and *ordini antichi*, presumably because doing so allows them to profit from undisrupted productive activity in their states. Although on his account human desire is insatiable, Machiavelli does, then, seem to think there are some limits to how much one person can hope to possess; princes want to acquire, hold, and incorporate into their *stato* other states in order to cream off the increased wealth that larger states will generate, but, as a single individual, the prince cannot possibly have the appetite to absorb the resources of an entire state.

By contrast, the republic emerges in the *Discorsi* as an entity which is naturally predisposed to enervate and consume "all other bodies" in pursuit of its own growth. Even if the prince succeeds in merging his subject cities into a single political unit, his relationship to his state remains parasitic; the imperial republic, however, is a devourer of states. Why is it that

imperial incorporation looks so different under the prince and under the republic? The answer is implicit in Machiavelli's theory of human nature and its relationship to empire. A *popolo* ruled by a prince will not display the same hunger for acquisition as one which is free. Even the prince who follows Machiavelli's advice in *Il Principe* 17 to refrain from confiscating his subjects' possessions gives his state's inhabitants only limited incentive to acquire more things, since their property remains precariously dependent on his continued forbearance; in fact, the prince's subjects do not technically have property at all, as the prince is the owner of his state and everything in it.[564] The people's acquisitive desire is therefore capped in the principality, but under the republic it is magnified. When the *popolo* is *principe*, it quite obviously forms a much larger compound of acquisitive desire than that embodied by a single prince. Moreover, at an ontological level, the *popolo* as an artificial agglomeration of natural bodies is much better suited than the single, purely natural body of the prince to the business of ingesting and digesting other bodies; the prince can redirect towards himself ties of recognition and obedience, but it is hard to see how he could dissolve foreign bodies into his own body in order to make it grow larger.

This basic ontological distinction helps explain, I think, the striking prominence of the language of demographic and material growth in Machiavelli's description of the free life quoted above: the security of possession that freedom affords encourages people not only to produce more *within* the state—which in turn helps sustain larger populations—but also to go *outside* the state to acquire things. And, when drawn into the state's body, these external materials further stoke the republic's growth. Under the imperial republic, a virtuous circle is thus drawn: acquisitive desire -- imperial acquisition -- increased material resources -- a larger population --

[564] *Il Principe* 17, pp. 111–12.

more acquisitive desire -- and so on. This cycle simply never gets going in the principality, since even princes who are effective imperialists cannot truly feed their subjects' acquisitive appetites, only their own. On the other hand, republics, especially those which follow the Roman model, fan the flames of acquisitive desire by granting the *popolo* the freedom to expand; not only is the imperial republic capable of using the material resources it extracts from foreign states to help support an increasing domestic population, but—as we shall examine more closely below—it can also assimilate foreign bodies into the free *popolo* via the mechanism of citizenship, thereby further enlarging its block of acquisitive desire.

As we observed in passing above, it is important to recognize that the way in which Machiavelli couples liberty and empire in the *Discorsi* differs distinctively to the approach that Sallust takes in his account of the Roman Republic's growth and decay in the *Bellum Catilinae*, a text which is often seen as undergirding Machiavelli's efforts here in 2.2.[565] It is beyond any doubt that, like Salutati and Bruni before him,[566] Machiavelli would have noted keenly Sallust's remark in *Bellum Catilinae* 7 that it was astonishing how quickly the Roman *civitas* grew (*creverit*) once it had been freed from monarchy. And there are certainly clear linguistic and conceptual correspondences between this portion of Sallust's text and passages of 2.2.[567]

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[565] Patricia J. Osmond, "Sallust and Machiavelli: from Civic Humanism to Political Prudence," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23.3 (1993): 407–38, at 420–30; Benedetto Fontana, "Sallust and the Politics of Machiavelli," *History of Political Thought* 24.1 (2003): 86–108, at 100–05. For Sallust's influence on pre-humanist Italian republican thought, see Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2, *Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20–30.

[566] Osmond, "Sallust and Machiavelli," 414–18.

[567] For instance, cf. Sall. *Cat*. 7: "Sed civitas incredibile memoratu est adepta libertate quantum brevi creverit;" and *Discorsi* 2.2, p. 139: "Ma sopra tutto maravigliosissima è a considerare a quanta grandezza venne Roma, poiché la si libero dai suoi re."

However, the similarities between the two authors' treatments of empire from a theoretical perspective largely end here. Indeed, if Machiavelli is looking at Sallust while laying out this part of his theory, then he does so principally to revise the classical account. This work starts at a foundational level. As we have seen, Machiavelli's theory of empire—and, for that matter, his theory of politics—in the *Discorsi* takes as its most basic premise the idea that humans are by nature insatiably acquisitive creatures. Early in the *Bellum Catilinae*, however, Sallust effectively makes the opposite point: "in the beginning … men were still living their lives at that time without greed [*cupiditate*]; each person was quite content with his own possessions."[568] For Sallust, insatiable desire is not a perennial fact of human existence which every state must account for, but rather a disease afflicting only the sickly body politic. In the Roman case, the desire for advancement (*ambitio*), luxury (*luxuria*), and particularly avarice (*avaritia*)—which Sallust moralistically defines as "always boundless and insatiable"—that emerged in the wake of Rome's imperial triumph in the Mediterranean were indicators of the republic's deteriorating health:

> When the *res publica* had grown [*crevit*] through toil and justice [*iustitia*], 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 *imperium*, had perished root and branch, and all seas and lands lay open, then Fortune began to be savage and throw all into confusion … A craving first for money, then for *imperium* grew … These vices grew little by little at first …; later, when the disease had spread like a deadly plague, the *civitas* was changed, and *imperium*, instead of being the most just and best, became cruel and intolerable.[569]

[568] Sall. *Cat*. 1.

[569] Sall. *Cat*. 10. Skinner has shown that Sallust's point here that the Roman Republic grew by means of toil and justice was seized on by pre-humanist Italian thinkers who wanted to underline the importance of maintaining justice within the republican community. However, Skinner does not indicate that the surrounding passages of this portion of the *Bellum Catilinae* suggest that Sallust is more concerned here with the practice of

These symptoms grew especially acute in the aftermath of Sulla's dictatorship and came to be embodied most outrageously in Sallust's antihero, Catiline, whose "insatiable mind," Sallust informs us, "always craved the excessive, the incredible, the impossible."[570] The account of acquisitive desire corrupting the republic and eventually overspilling into civil war thus functions for Sallust as a narratological device with which he tries to make sense of the Catilinarian problem. But for his explanation to work, Sallust must commit—as Cicero had in *De officiis*—to a vision of an earlier phase of Roman imperialism, unmarred by the damaging effects of insatiable desire. At this point Machiavelli's theory diverges still more sharply.

Even under the kings, Sallust depicts Rome's foreign policy as characteristically righteous. The early Romans, he notes, "defended with arms their *libertas*, as well as their *patria* and parents," from neighbouring peoples jealous of the city's increasing strength and prosperity. Moreover, the Romans were quick to forge in Italy a nexus of foreign alliances based on the granting of military benefits: "they rendered aid [*auxilia*] to their allies and friends, and established friendly relations rather by giving than by receiving *beneficia*."[571] From the outset, then, Rome's relationship to the world beyond the *civitas* is represented as a model of moral probity. And this pattern, Sallust explains, was repeated and elaborated after Rome became a rapidly growing free state:

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justice *between* states, and specifically with Rome's traditionally just dealings with its imperial rivals and subjects. Skinner, *Renaissance Virtues*, 25–26.

[570] Sall. *Cat*. 5.

[571] Sall. *Cat*. 6.

> Good morals were cultivated at home and on campaign; there was the greatest harmony, the least avarice; right and decency prevailed among them, thanks not so much to laws as to nature. Quarrels, discord, and feuds were carried out against their enemies; citizen vied with citizen only for the prize of merit [*de virtute certabant*] … By these two practices, boldness in warfare and justice [*aequitas*] when peace came about, they watched over themselves and their country.[572]

This idealized portrait of a harmonious Rome in which civic competition is strictly a matter of *virtus* is essentially the inverse of Machiavelli's image of the tumultuous Roman Republic, locked in class conflict over the allocation of governmental power and material goods. More relevant to our concerns, however, is the fact that Sallust's description here of an upright, inherently just Roman foreign policy could also scarcely be any less Machiavellian. The degradation of Roman mores which Sallust charts is accompanied in his analysis by slipping standards of imperial justice. While the great men (*maiores*) of Rome's past "took nothing from the vanquished except the license to do injury [*iniuriae licentiam*]," the corrupt Romans of his day despoil Rome's allies (*socii*), "as if to do a wrong [*iniuria*] were precisely what it means to exercise *imperium*."[573] As Sallust later has Cato put it, the *maiores* did not rely on arms alone to make "the *res publica* great from humble beginnings," but also on, among other things, "a just rule abroad [*foris iustum imperium*]."[574]

Justice, however, is nowhere to be seen in Machiavelli's analysis in *Discorsi* 2.2 of the dynamic between Rome's freedom and its imperial growth. Indeed, *giustizia* and its cognates are virtually absent from Book Two: Machiavelli uses the term "*giustificazione*" (justification) when

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[572] Sall. *Cat*. 9.

[573] Sall. *Cat*. 12. Cf. Augustine, *Dei civitate Dei* 19.21, paraphrasing Cic. *Rep*. 3.36.

[574] Sall. *Cat*. 52.

explaining a strategy with which states can provoke war with foreign powers bound to them by treaty,[575] and there is a single mention of "*giustizia*" with reference to a Livian instance of Rome failing to uphold the *ius gentium*,[576] but this is the extent to which he articulates a language of justice in the book of the *Discorsi* dedicated to Roman imperialism. This second example shows Machiavelli's lack of interest in defending some notion of *iustum imperium*. Machiavelli notes in 2.28 that the Romans failed to punish their ambassadors for attacking the Gauls when they were supposed to be negotiating peace terms, and that this "failure to observe justice" provoked the Gaulish attack on Rome of 390 BCE. Machiavelli's point is a pragmatic, not a normative one: people who believe they have suffered an "injury" (*ingiuria*) will take justice into their own hands if they are not avenged to their satisfaction. The Romans' mistake therefore was not so much to breach the *ius gentium*, but, once they had done so, to fail to satisfy the slighted party; a matter more of imprudence than injustice.

It must be stressed therefore that Machiavelli's theory of empire does not imply at any point the existence of some universal standard of justice—such as the classical and medieval formulations of the *ius naturale* or *ius gentium*—to which states are obliged to conform their actions. As we are starting to see, however, the concept of *ingiuria* (injury) is more prevalent. For instance, Machiavelli will note that, once they realized they were being "oppressed" by Rome, its allies (*compagni*) formed a league against the republic "to avenge their *ingiurie.*"[577] We shall return to this episode below, but it immediately illustrates the chasm separating the

[575] *Discorsi* 2.9, p. 158.

[576] *Discorsi* 2.28, p. 211.

[577] *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 147.

Sallustian and Machiavellian analyses of Rome's imperial trajectory. Like Sallust, Machiavelli finds that Rome's imperialism would eventually come to corrupt its domestic politics,[578] but he does not think this development represented a just, benevolent imperial power mutating into an unjust, rapacious one; the Roman Republic had always been a self-interested, aggressive consumer of other states and their resources because, contra Sallust, its free way of life fed an insatiable appetite for acquisition which had been present in the Roman *popolo* from the very start. Given this, we can appreciate why Machiavelli chooses to remain deafeningly silent on the topic of imperial justice. In wanting to claim that the uncorrupted Roman Republic set the standard for just *imperium*, it seems that Sallust, like Cicero before him,[579] had to commit to the view that Rome used to preserve not only its imperial subjects' property, but also their liberty; he certainly does not want to suggest that the *maiores* went about robbing and enslaving foreign peoples. On the Ciceronian-Sallustian account, then, to exercise *imperium* justly means to respect subject peoples' liberty, or, at the very least, to infringe on their freedom only when it can be argued that doing so is in their best interests. For Machiavelli, however, the corollary of the Romans' expanding *imperio* was the enslavement of other free peoples, beginning in Italy. The example he supplies in 2.2 of "the hardest slavery" is that of the Samnites, who from "being free" (*sendo liberi*), came to "slave" (*servendo*) under Rome. If we do want to see the *maiores* as providing the blueprint for republican empire, then we have to accept, on Machiavelli's account,

[578] *Discorsi* 1.18.

[579] Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann note that Sall. *Cat.* 9.5, along with some other passages from Roman literature, reflects Cicero's notion of *patrocinium* in Cic. *Off.* 2.26–27. Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann, "Introduction: The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations," in *The Roman Foundations*, ed. Kingsbury and Straumann, 9 n. 16.

that the enslavement of foreign subjects—which he clearly sees an injurious act—had always been part of their plan.

When Machiavelli says, then, that it is only the republic which provides for the common good, he is talking solely about the good of the republic's fully incorporated free members. Moreover, Machiavelli refuses to posit—unlike Cicero seems to have in *De republica*—a benevolent, caring, yet nevertheless unfree form of subjection associated with the Roman *res publica*; indeed, slavery under an imperial republic is said to be the hardest of all. The only conceivable way that the common good and liberty could come to embrace subject peoples would be if the republic granted them full citizen status. But while citizenship might in this way be seen to hold the key to transforming imperial slavery into republican freedom, in Machiavelli's hands the concept takes on some—not entirely un-Roman—coercive and domineering qualities. We shall see that making an imperial dependent into a citizen involves not just the creation of a new free subject, but also the destruction of an old one.

V. SUBJECTION AND THE IMPERIAL REPUBLIC

We have observed that the republic's imperial endgame is to build up its body at the expense of other bodies of peoples and states. I now want to look more closely at how this process progresses in Machiavelli's mind, paying particular attention, as I have tried throughout this dissertation, to the consequences that imperialism is thought to have for subject peoples and their free or unfree status.

Having revealed the republic's *fine* in *Discorsi* 2.2, in 2.3 Machiavelli hones in on the problem of growing the free state's body, which will occupy him in way or another throughout the remainder of Book Two. He opens with a quote from Livy—"Rome meanwhile grows on Alba's ruins"[580]—and then immediately notes that "those who plan for a city to make a great *imperio* … must make it full of inhabitants." Recalling the binary distinction he had established more than fifteen years earlier in the *Discorso sopra Pisa*, Machiavelli explains that there are two ways of achieving this: "by love or by force." The first method involves an open-door immigration policy that allows willing foreigners to move to the city; the second entails "unmaking [*disfacendo*] nearby cities and sending their inhabitants to live in your city," a piece of advice which has conceptual and linguistic echoes of both *Del modo* and *Il Principe* 5.[581] But the most obvious companion piece to this chapter is of course *Discorsi* 1.6. Here we saw that Rome's decision to increase its *popolo* was judged to be wiser than that of Sparta and Venice, republics which went out of their way to constrain popular growth, precisely because a strong *popolo* is necessary in order to acquire and maintain *imperio*. And Machiavelli underlines and elaborates this same point in 2.3: Rome adopted the methods of both *amore* and *forza* and was thus able to "enlarge the body of its city" (*ingrossato … il corpo della sua città*). In doing so, it was left in an ideal position "to grow and make an empire" (*ampliare e fare imperio*). Machiavelli offers here an arboreal image to illustrate the process of imperial growth:

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[580] "Roma interim crescit Albae ruinis." Livy 1.30.1. Machiavelli renders the passage as "Crescit interea Roma Albae ruinis." *Discorsi* 2.3, p. 144.

[581] "Quegli che disegnono che una città faccia grande imperio, si debbono con ogni industria ingegnare di farla piena di abitatori; perché, sanza questa abbondanza di uomini, mai non riuscirà di fare grande una città. Questo si fa in due modi: per amore e per forza. Per amore, tenendo le vie aperte e sicure a' forestieri che disegnassono venire ad abitare in quella, acciocché ciascuno vi abiti volentieri: per forza, disfacendo le città vicine, e mandando gli abitatori di quelle ad abitare nella tua città." *Discorsi* 2.3, p. 144.

> Because all our actions imitate nature, it is neither possible nor natural for a thin trunk to support a heavy branch. Therefore a small republic cannot occupy cities or kingdoms that are stronger or larger than it is; and even if it does occupy them, what happens to it is like what happens to a tree that has a branch heavier than its trunk: it can barely support the branch and the slightest wind blows it down … This could not happen to Rome, which had a trunk so thick that it could easily support any branch.[582]

Here the imperial *città* is a tree's "trunk" (*pedale* / *piè*), and subject states its "branches" (*rami*). Are we thus witnessing the return, in a somewhat altered form, of the idea introduced in *Il Principe* 3 that the imperial state "adds" (*aggiungere*) other states as "limbs" (*membri*) to its body? And if so, is Machiavelli putting to one side for now his emerging conceptualization of republican imperialism as bodily absorption? One crucial issue which is not satisfactorily resolved in this discourse is what role citizenship might play in bringing subject peoples into the *popolo* via the method of love. The discourse's title suggests that it does do important work in the theory: "Rome became a great city by ruining its neighboring cities and readily accepting foreigners into its public offices [*onori*]."[583] Machiavelli notes in the chapter that Lycurgus refused to grant foreigners Spartan "citizenship" (*civilità*), but does not comment that the Romans were right to take the opposite approach, although the contrast implicitly makes the point for him. More importantly, the Livian episode Machiavelli has under examination here may be instructive enough in itself: after Alba Longa had been destroyed, Tullus Hostilius

[582] "E perché tutte le azioni nostre imitano la natura, non è possibile né naturale che uno pedale sottile sostenga uno ramo grosso. Però una republica piccola non può occupare città né regni che sieno piú validi né piú grossi di lei; e, se pure gli occupa, gl'interviene come a quello albero che avesse piú grosso il ramo che il piede, che, sostenendolo con fatica, ogni piccol vento lo fiacca … Il che non potette intervenire a Roma, avendo il piè sí grosso, che qualunque ramo poteva facilmente sostenere." *Discorsi* 2.3, p. 145.

[583] "Roma divenne gran città rovinando le città circunvicine, e ricevendo i forestieri facilmente a' suoi onori." *Discorsi* 2.3, p. 144.

doubled the number of Roman citizens (*cives*) by assimilating the displaced Alban population and nominated Alban nobles as senators (*patres*), "so that this part of the *res publica* might grow too."[584] Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that, by fixing on this particular moment of Roman history, Machiavelli is advising that conquered peoples should always be admitted into citizenship. At this early stage in Book Two, Machiavelli is in fact deferring his discussion of the process whereby peoples and states can become fully absorbed into the imperial republic—which will necessitate a close inspection of the imperial aspects of Roman citizenship—until he has moved further into the book and the theory.

In the following chapter, Machiavelli points out that not only did Rome enlarge its population in the way described above, but it also made allies (*compagni*) who helped further its imperial designs; it was by combining these two policies that Rome "rose to such exceptional power" (*eccessiva potenza*). This discourse is of central importance to Machiavelli's theory of empire. When we are interrogating the nature of the relationship between imperial growth and the subjection of foreign peoples, much rides on our sense of the meanings that Machiavelli ascribes to the terms *compagni*, his translation of the Latin term *socii*, on the one hand, and *sudditi* or *suggetti*, which have less clear Latin referents, on the other. I now want to try to clarify this conceptual distinction.

It is helpful, as always, to consider the classical linguistic and conceptual material that Machiavelli is working with in the *Discorsi*. To this end, Myles Lavan's explication of the Roman "lexicon of empire" once again proves illuminating.[585] The Latin term *socii* is best

[584] Livy 1.30.

[585] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 35–72.

rendered into English as 'allies,' 'partners,' or 'companions,' and this is the sense picked out by Machiavelli's translation of the word as *compagni*. As Lavan shows, *socius* has a wide and shifting semantic range in classical Latin literature, but its primary use in imperial discourse is to describe peoples who are not Rome's enemies, and therefore have some form of non-hostile relationship with the Roman state, yet are also not Roman citizens, and thus remain outside the *res publica*. The term originally designated Rome's non-Latin Italian allies, and it retained this specific meaning up to the Social War (91–87 BCE). But non-Italians could also be referred to as *socii* during the Republican period, particularly when Roman writers wanted to present Rome's foreign relations in a benevolent light. In the *Verrines*, for instance, Cicero is careful to call the Sicilians "*socii*," which shows the term's compatibility with the patron-client model of empire that we saw at work here. As Lavan summarizes, the label *socii* signals "association rather than *subjection*," but "it also suggests association rather than *integration*."[586] It is in this double meaning where the term's considerable ideological utility lies: "the label 'allies' nicely captures the combination of dependence and separation that characterised the status of the Italians before their enfranchisement and that of Rome's overseas subjects throughout the Republic."[587] But the question we have to put to Machiavelli is this: are we to understand *compagni* as being free? For the Romans, at least in the Republican period, the language of association, even if it often carried with it implications of dependency, seems to have provided an alternative imperial register to that of slavery. Machiavelli clearly notices as much, but his theory will cut through the creative

[586] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 67.

[587] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 67–68.

ambiguity of the Roman approach to *socii* to get at the heart of the free-slave binary in its imperial setting.

Machiavelli scrutinizes in 2.4 the three ways of expanding a republic that ancient history has shown to be possible. One, represented by, among other examples, the Etruscans and the Swiss, involves forming a league of equal republics, which, as it expands, "makes other cities allies" (*farsi l'altre città compagne*). Another, illustrated by the Spartan and Athenian empires, is "immediately to make subjects and not allies" (*farsi immediate sudditi e non compagni*). But the preferred method is that of Rome: "to make allies, but not to the extent, however, that you do not retain the position of command, the seat of *imperio*, and the leadership of military campaigns."[588] Machiavelli's description here of this uniquely Roman mode of republican growth appears to be keyed into a Livian passage in which the Latin praetor Annius Setinus, a figure whom we shall encounter again, complains to the Romans about their treatment of their supposed imperial partners; Annius demands that the Latins be given equal representation in the consulship and senate, and that the Romans and Latins should be merged into "one people and one *res publica*," with "the same seat of *imperium*."[589] The point Machiavelli wants to make, however, is that Rome was in fact wise to refuse the Latins and its other Italian allies a more meaningful stake in its imperial project. But why?

We need to recognize that both the Spartan-Athenian and Roman models produce subject populations.[590] But whereas Sparta and Athens "immediately" tried to impose direct rule over

[588] "L'altro modo è farsi compagni: non tanto però che non ti rimanga il grado del comandare, la sedia dello imperio ed il titolo delle imprese." *Discorsi*, 2.4, p. 146.

[589] Livy 8.5.

[590] Connell, "Growth as an End," 266.

subjects, the Roman strategy progressed more slowly and subtly. As Machiavelli notes, "to take on responsibility of governing cities by violence, especially those that have been accustomed to living freely, is difficult and tiring. And if you are not armed, and heavily, you can neither command nor rule them." The Spartans and Athenians therefore made the mistake of attempting to subject peoples—and, as they were their fellow Greeks, particularly recalcitrant *free* peoples––without first securing an overwhelming military advantage. As we saw, each republic undermined its imperial foundation by refusing to increase its *popolo*, but here we also find, at least in Machiavelli's reading of Greek history, that both the Spartans and Athenians failed to secure allies who could have helped them subject others. According to Machiavelli, to rule subject states "it is necessary to make allies to help you and increase your city's *popolo*."[591] Since Sparta and Athens did neither of these things, their imperial efforts came to nothing; in fact, both republics were ruined because they "acquired a *dominio* that they could not hold."[592]

It is at this point that the Roman model's sinister logic starts to become apparent. We know that Rome took measures to enlarge its *popolo*, but it also "made throughout Italy many allies, who in many respects lived with Rome under equal laws [*equali leggi vivevano*]." But, Machiavelli's sentence continues, "since Rome had always reserved for itself the seat of *imperio* and the title of command, its allies came, without realizing it, to subjugate themselves [*a*

[591] "Pigliare cura di avere a governare città con violenza, massime quelle che fussono consuete a vivere libere, è una cosa difficile e faticosa. E se tu non sei armato, e grosso d'armi, non le puoi né comandare né reggere. Ed a volere essere così fatto, è necessario farsi compagni che ti aiutino, e ingrossare la tua città di popolo." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 146.

[592] "Le quali non rovinarono per altro, se non per avere acquistato quel dominio che le non potevano tenere." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 146.

soggiogare se stessi] with their own toil and blood."[593] This process whereby the *compagni* brought themselves under the Roman yoke was only made possible by Rome's deceptive imperial strategy. After the Romans began to extend their reach beyond Italy and "make subjects of people who, since they were used to living under kings, did not mind being made subjects," the *compagni* were left in a desperate position. Because it was Rome that provided their governors and headed up the armies which conquered them, the foreign peoples whom the *compagni* had helped subject "did not recognize any other superior than Rome."[594] Here we are reminded both of *La cagione dell'ordinanza*, in which the communities in the Florentine *dominium* were said to "recognize no other lord [*padrone*] than Florence," and, even more strikingly, of *Il Principe* 4, where Machiavelli explained that subjects of the more powerful type of prince exemplified by the Ottoman sultan do not "recognize anyone as being superior to him." Machiavelli seems to be indicating again that he conceptualizes the construction of states and empires as a process which, at the most fundamental level, involves securing the *recognition* of command. For this reason, it matters little that the *compagni* lived with the Romans under a shared legal structure; it is *imperio*, not *leggi*, which in the first instance binds a state together and the Romans had been careful to concentrate *imperio* in their own hands, and, moreover, to have this fact recognized. Subjected peoples thus identified the Romans as the imperial masters, leaving the *compagni* without subjects and, in a sense, without a state: they "found themselves

[593] *Soggiogare* appears only three other times in the *Discorsi*; all instances are in Book Two, and all refer to Rome's dealings with alien peoples and cities: 2.1, 2.2, and 2.32. Literally, the verb means "to place under the yoke." The term's Latin equivalent, *subigere*, is frequently deployed in Roman imperial discourse and creates a comparison between subjected peoples and domesticated animals. See Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 83–88.

[594] "Farsi suggetti coloro che, per essere consueti a vivere sotto i re, non si curavano di essere suggetti, ed avendo governatori romani, ed essendo stati vinti da eserciti con il titolo romano, non riconoscevano per superiore altro che Roma." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 147.

surrounded by Roman subjects and oppressed by the huge city that Rome was."[595] Once the *compagni* saw through "the deception [*inganno*] under which they had been living," they joined together in a league "to avenge their injuries" (*per vendicarsi delle ingiurie ingiurie*).[596] But Rome's power was now irresistible and, after being defeated, the *compagni* had their status degraded further: "from being allies, they too became subjects."[597]

Quite what the *compagni*'s subjection entailed is difficult to say here in 2.4. Since Machiavelli describes the *compagni* as being encircled by Rome's provincial subjects at the time of their rebellion, it seems that he must be referring to the Social War (91–87 BCE)—and not the Latin War (340–38 BCE)—as by this time Rome had conquered most of the Mediterranean world, and, in Machiavellian terms, established a ring of subjection around the Italian peninsula. But the Social War's most significant outcome was of course the admission of the *socii*, and eventually all free Italian peoples, into Roman citizenship, and thus Machiavelli's comment that the *compagni* became *sudditi* after their defeat appears out of place. Unless he makes the error of transposing the result of the Latin War to the first century BCE,[598] the only plausible solution to this puzzle is that Machiavelli is suggesting that the offer of Roman citizenship was in fact an instrument of subjection. This would be a subversive observation indeed, and one which Bruni had shied away from making in the *Historiae*. Machiavelli's point would seem to be that the

[595] "Si trovarono in un tratto cinti da' sudditi romani, ed oppressi da una grossissima città come era Roma." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 147.

[596] "E quando ei s'avviddono dello inganno sotto il quale erano vissuti." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 147.

[597] "Di compagni diventarono ancora loro sudditi." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 147.

[598] Corrado Vivanti suggests that Machiavelli may have done just this: *Discorsi*, 2.4, p. 147, n. 17 (note at p. 510).

compagni had got exactly what they wanted—namely absorption into the Roman state as citizens—but this of course marked the end of any hopes of autonomy; indeed, it meant the irreversible termination of their previous civic identities.[599] All Italy was now Rome.

The reality of what Rome's imperial expansion entailed for the *compangi* is thrown into even sharper relief in *Discorsi* 2.13. Here the imperial process which Machiavelli outlines in 2.4 is categorically described as one of enslavement. Jettisoning the language of *suggetti* and *sudditi*, Machiavelli clarifies that Rome transformed its *compagni* into *servi*, a result obtained by fraud. Machiavelli's lesson here is that republics must behave like new princes when ascending to imperial power:

> What princes are obliged to do when they begin to grow great, republics are also obliged to do, until they have become powerful and force alone is enough. And because … Rome used all means necessary to achieve greatness, it did not overlook this one either [i.e. *fraude*]. It could not have initially have used any greater deception than choosing the method I have discussed above of making allies [*compagni*] for itself, because under this name it made them slaves [*servi*], as the Latins and other surrounding peoples were.[600]

It should now be plain that Machiavelli is eviscerating here the Ciceronian ethical defense of imperialism rearticulated by his humanist predecessors. Indeed, the contrast with Salutati and Bruni is particularly revealing, since the example of the modern prince whom Machiavelli places at the Romans' side is none other than Giangaleazzo Visconti. Thus both the Florentine people's

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[599] On the incorporation of the *socii* following the Social War, see Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 126–48; E. T. Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 128–42.

[600] "Quel che sono necessitati fare i principi ne' principii degli augmenti loro, sono ancora necessitate a fare le republiche, infino che le siano diventate potenti e che basti la forza sola. E perché Roma tenne in ogni parte … tutti i modi necessari a venire a grandezza, non mancò ancora di questo. Né poté usare, nel principio, il maggiore inganno, che pigliare il modo … di farsi compagni: perché sotto questo nome se gli fece servi: come furono i Latini, ed altri popoli a lo intorno." Machiavelli, *Discorsi* 2.13, pp. 166–67.

supposed Roman forefathers and their tyrannical archenemy practiced fraud in order to gain *imperio*. The language of *fides* and *iustitia* is conspicuous by its absence; imperial growth is attained only by *fraude* and *forza*. Although in Book Three Machiavelli will note that fraudulently breaking promises and treaties is no way to acquire glory, he nevertheless maintains that doing so will sometimes, as in the Roman and Visconti cases, acquire one a state (*stato*) or a kingdom (*regno*).[601] Machiavelli's claim here in 2.13 is that Rome came to rule its neighbours as princes rule *all* of their subjects, that is as slaves.[602] Whereas in 2.4 he had said that, by helping Rome subject non-Italians, the *compagni* subjugated *themselves*, here Machiavelli is explicit that it is the *Romans* who reduced the allies to servitude. It seems, then, that, even if the *compagni* in fighting Rome's wars helped put the yoke over their own necks, the imperial stratagem of creating slaves under the name of allies was unquestionably a Roman one.

While making this argument, Machiavelli draws inspiration from a classical critique of Roman imperialism. He quotes from a speech that Livy gives to the Latin preator Annius Setinus—the same speech cited above—who comments that the Latins "endure servitude … under the semblance of a treaty among equals."[603] Machiavelli takes us back here to the Latin War, and in doing so complicates the narrative of Italian subjection he had laid out in 2.4, which we saw culminated with the Social War. While the *compagni* may have been definitively subjugated by the first century BCE, the process was clearly well under way here in the fourth.

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[601] *Discorsi* 3.40, p. 322.

[602] For Machiavelli's description of princely states as unfree, see for now Stacey, "Free and Unfree States," 185.

[603] "Nam si etiam nunc sub umbra foederis aequi servitutem pati possumus." Livy 8.4.2, quoted at *Discorsi* 2.13, p. 167.

Indeed, Machiavelli observes that the Latins realized they were "entirely enslaved" (*al tutto servi*) after Rome's crushing victory in the First Samnite War (343–41 BCE). This raises the question of whether, in Machiavelli's eyes, the allies had ever been truly free; was their liberty as so-called *compagni* merely illusory? It seems again that once a state sets in motion an imperial process—and we should recall that Rome had from the beginning reserved itself "the seat of *imperio*"—the peoples and states that start to recognize and obey its *imperio*, even if they do not realize what is happening, enter into a liminal state between liberty and servitude. It is certainly Machiavelli's view here in 2.13 that Rome began to enslave portions of the Italian peninsula well before it started to acquire subjects in the provinces. It is important to note that Livy himself does not leave unchallenged Annius's representation of Rome's dealings with the Latins; he has a Roman consul refute the allegation of enslavement, invoking "law and right" (*ius fasque*), and reminding the Latins of their treaty terms, as well as the "*beneficia*" they had received from Rome.[604] Machiavelli thus appropriates anti-Roman rhetoric embedded in his chief source to demonstrate the fraud that, in his view, was indispensable to the Roman Republic's success as an imperial state; a success which left it the master of other peoples.[605]

Of the three methods of expanding the republic discussed in 2.4, Machiavelli's endorsement of the Roman example is unequivocal: "a republic that wants to expand cannot act in any other way, because experience has not shown us any surer or truer one."[606] He awards

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[604] Livy 8.5.8–10.

[605] Machiavelli also comments that Rome consistently used both *fraude* and *forza* in warfare, and also gained the upper hand over its neighbours by imposing on them unequal treaties. *Discorsi* 2.32.

[606] "Né può tenere altro modo una republica che voglia ampliare, perché la esperienza non ce ne ha mostro nessuno piú certo o piú vero." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 147.

second place to the league method, but several modern commentators have read against the grain of Machiavelli's text to argue that this is in fact his preferred model.[607] Although leagues do provide their members with some security and, in the exceptional Etruscan case, might even help them reach "the highest glory of *imperio*" (*somma gloria d'imperio*), Machiavelli cannot recommend them above the Roman model, since leagues do not allow for large-scale expansion. Leagues have a "fixed limit" (*termine fisso*) of some half a dozen members because adding further members as *compagni* leads to confusion over collective decision making. Moreover, leagues have little interest in making *sudditi*; since *dominio* is shared among a league's members, "they do not value such acquisition as does a single republic that hopes to enjoy it all for itself."[608] The league's composite form works to dilute the desire to dominate and thus places a cap on imperial expansion; in terms of acquisitive desire, a league is less than the sum of its parts.

It should hopefully be clear by now why we should take Machiavelli at his word that he does not prefer this model to the one provided by Rome. Indeed, the Roman model now emerges

[607] Viroli presents the league model in considerably more favourable light than Machiavelli does himself. Viroli is right to say that Machiavelli recommends forming a league if "imitation of the Romans seems difficult," but we need to be clear that this is the inferior method. For Viroli, the Roman model itself is "not predatory at all, since it consisted in forming alliances … and in granting Roman citizenship to conquered or allied peoples." Viroli, *Machiavelli*, 101–02 and 139–40. For an even more sanitized account of Machiavelli's thoughts on the three imperial models, see Benner, *Machiavelli's Ethics*, 475–83. McCormick hints that Machiavelli may favour the league model as represented by the Swiss: McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy*, 58–59. Connell recognizes that Machiavelli recommends the Roman model, and that Rome used fraud to transform its *compagni* into *sudditi*, but does not consider if subjection meant enslavement. Moreover, Connell sees the subjection of the *compagni* as occurring only at the conclusion of the Social War, and therefore the mode involves "delaying the final subjection of a republic's neighbours until such a moment when *the partners forced the republic to subject them*." Emphasis added. Connell, "Growth as an End," 265–69 at 266.

[608] "Non sono desiderosi di dominare: perché, essendo molte comunità a participare di quel dominio, non stimano tanto tale acquisto quanto fa una republica sola, che spera di goderselo tutto." *Discorsi* 2.4, p. 147–48.

as the league model fraudulently revised in order to allow a single state to acquire *dominio* over subjects while exploiting the assistance of so-called '*compagni.*' Machiavelli's views on the insatiability of acquisitive desire and the *fine* this gives to the free state means that limiting a republic's capacity for growth by forcing it into a league structure is to deny its *nature*. We can again see the way in which Books One and Two of the *Discorsi* are intimately interconnected. Machiavelli's advice in *Discorsi* 1.5–6 on how to compose the republic internally leads us directly to the Roman model of expansion: if you have listened to me and given your republic a large, armed populace, instituted popular magistracies, and, by doing so, embraced class conflict within your state, then why on earth, Machiavelli will ask, would you want to join a league? If you have chosen to constitute your republic like Rome, then you have done so to enable it to pursue its *fine*: to keep itself free and grow its body at the expense of all other bodies. Although we may be tempted to decouple Machiavelli's thoughts on what should happen inside and outside the republican state—the latter are certainly rather difficult to square with what we might hope for in contemporary international relations—doing so is nevertheless to prize apart a necessarily monolithic political theory.

We have seen that republican empire in its ideal, Roman mode involves acquiring subjects by force and fraud. Now when the imperial republic subjugates peoples living in monarchical states, these subjects remain in an unfree condition: one *principe* simply replaces another. This fact means that a republic should not encounter too much difficulty when trying to establish its *imperio* over peoples already habituated to servitude. Indeed, as Machiavelli notes in 1.16, a *popolo* that is used to living under a *principe* "is like nothing but a brute beast that, though by nature ferocious and wild, has always been raised in captivity and bondage. If by

chance it is then set free in the countryside, it falls prey to the first man who seeks to chain it up."[609] These are strong words indeed about the psychological effects of unfreedom and we can appreciate why Machiavelli would think that such peoples make for soft imperial targets. But it is quite another matter when a republic subjects another republic's inhabitants. Here Machiavelli sees a transition from liberty to servitude occurring, since a formerly self-mastering group of people acquires an alien master. Securing *imperio* over formerly free peoples is therefore a much more complicated operation and it is here in particular that a republic will need to dissemble.

We can see the importance of hiding from some imperial subjects their true status in Machiavelli's treatment of Rome's dealings with Capua.[610] The Campanians had voluntarily surrendered to Rome in 343 BCE in order to secure Roman protection against the Samnites.[611] Machiavelli comments on this episode in 2.9, noting that, once the Campanians had transformed themselves from Rome's "friends" (*amici*) into its "subjects" (*sudditi*), the Romans felt obliged to defend them, "judging that not undertaking such a defense would close the road to all those who might want to come under their power [*potestà*]."[612] This description of Roman foreign policy might seem to hint at the concept of the protectorate: Rome must convince alien peoples

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[609] "Quel popolo è non altrimenti che un animale bruto, il quale, ancora che di natura feroce e silvestre, sia stato nutrito sempre in carcere ed in servitú; che dipoi lasciato a sorte in una campagna libero, non essendo uso a pascersi, né sappiendo i luoghi dove si abbia a rifuggire, diventa preda del primo che cerca rincatenarlo." *Discorsi* 1.16, p. 48.

[610] My interpretation of Machiavelli's thoughts on Capua differs to that of Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 131–33. I argue that Machiavelli believes the Campanians are, in reality, Rome's unfree subjects from the moment of their surrender in 343 BCE. Moreover, I suggest that any apparent inconsistency between Machiavelli's treatment of Capua in *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi* can be explained, quite straightforwardly, by the demands of the differing genres in which he was working.

[611] Livy 7.30–31.

[612] "Giudicando, quando e" non avessino presa tale difesa, tôrre la via a tutti quegli che disegnassino venire sotto la potestà loro." *Discorsi* 2.9, p. 157.

and states that, if they submit to its power, they will enjoy Roman protection. But Machiavelli is not resuscitating here the figure of Roman *imperium* as *patrocinium*; in fact, he is about to bury it. It is significant that Capua came under Rome's protection by an act of *deditio* (surrender), which Machiavelli translates here as "*dedizione*." We saw Bruni employing the concept in Book One of the *Historiae*, though he did not specify there how the Romans chose to treat peoples who placed themselves in Rome's *potestas*. Lavan helps to clarify the classical picture by noting that "the Romans' absolute power over the peoples who … surrendered to them is tempered by a moral obligation to protect their welfare."[613] Although Machiavelli suggests that it was prudent of Rome to defend its threatened subjects, since this encouraged others to submit to its power, he does not say that the Romans were *bound* to do so by any moral obligations. We found him making a similar point more than a decade earlier in the *Parole*, where he warned Florence that being unable to defend its Tuscan subjects was a worrying sign of imperial weakness; a pragmatic argument, and not one appealing to some sense that the Florentines held a duty of care. The crucial question from our perspective is this: does Machiavelli think that the republic upholds the free status of foreign peoples who volunteer to become its dependents?

We find our answer in 2.21. Here Machiavelli observes that Rome often maintained the illusion of self-determination inside its subject cities. He praises the Romans for leaving "the cities [*terre*] they did not destroy to live under their own laws, even those that surrendered to them as subjects and not as allies," continuing that "the Roman people left behind no sign of *imperio* in them [i.e. the cities they did not destroy], but they did hold them to a few conditions;

[613] Lavan, *Slaves to Rome*, 189.

if these were observed, they maintained their constitutional form [*stato*] and dignity."[614] His example is Capua. As Machiavelli knows from Livy's text, Capua was made to accept *civitas sine suffragio* in 338 BCE after its rebellion during the Latin War.[615] But, as he notes here, the city was only brought under Roman law in 317 BCE when the Campanians themselves requested that a Roman praetor be sent to "reorder" (*riordinasse*) and "reunite" (*riunisse*) their city following an outbreak of civil discord.[616] Machiavelli praises the Romans for their supposedly light imperial touch, since it led to the Campanians volunteering themselves to be brought under Roman "*giurisdizione*." And he also signals his approval of Florence's method of ruling Pistoia. He notes that Pistoia "came voluntarily under Florentine *imperio*," not because the Pistoians did not "value their liberty," but because the Florentines had always behaved towards them like "brothers" (*frategli*).[617] The Campanian and Pistoian examples demonstrate a point of human psychology: "men are more ready to throw themselves into your lap, the more averse you appear to be to conquering them, and they fear you less on account of their liberty, the more humane [*umano*] and friendly [*dimestico*] you are towards them."[618] Thus with "friendliness"

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[614] "E' lasciavano quelle terre, che non disfacevano, vivere con le leggi loro, eziandio quelle che, non come compagne, ma come suggette si arrendevano loro; ed in esse non lasciavano alcuno segno d'imperio per il Popolo romano, ma le obligavano a alcune condizioni, le quali osservando le mantenevano nello stato e dignità loro." *Discorsi* 2.21, p. 191.

[615] Livy 8.14.10.

[616] Livy 9.20.

[617] "La città di Pistoia venne volontariamente sotto lo imperio fiorentino. Ciascuno ancora sa quanta inimicizia è stata intra i fiorentini, e' pisani, lucchesi e sanesi: e questa diversità di animo non è nata, perché i pistolesi non prezzino la loro libertà come gli altri, e non si giudichino da quanto gli altri; ma per essersi i fiorentini portati con loro sempre come frategli, e con gli altri come inimici." *Discorsi* 2.21, p. 192.

[618] "Gli uomini tanto piú ti si gettono in grembo, quanto piú tu pari alieno dallo occupargli; e tanto meno ti temano per conto della loro libertà, quanto piú se' umano e dimestico con loro." *Discorsi* 2.21, p. 192.

(*dimestichezza*) and "liberality" (*liberalità*) it is possible to domesticate those brought under *imperio*. In fact, if the Florentines had treated all their neighbours as they did the Pistoians—that is "domesticating" them and not "making them wild" (*avessero dimesticati e non insalvatichiti*)––then they would have become the "lords [*signori*] of Tuscany." We might well recall here Machiavelli's unsettling image in 1.16 of the animal inured to slavery against its savage nature. Indeed, there should be no mistaking the fact that tamed subjects like the Campanians and Pistoians have forfeited their liberty:

> Those cities, especially those that are used to living in freedom, … are contented to live more quietly under a dominion they do not see ... than under one which, seeing every day, seems to them to reproach them daily for their servitude.[619]

Machiavelli may still want to save the Roman concepts discussed in this dissertation's opening two chapters for deployment in the ideological realm, but he rejects the idea that they do any more than camouflage the fact that, on his account, imperial rule is predicated on the master-slave relationship.

One issue which still needs resolving is how to reconcile Machiavelli's advice here about handling formerly free subjects with the argument we saw him making in *Il Principe* 5 that the surest way to maintain imperial rule over cities used to living in freedom, such as Capua and Pisa, is to destroy them. In his discussion of fortresses in *Discorsi* 2.24, Machiavelli echoes a passage from this chapter of *Il Principe*: the Florentines attempted to hold Pisa with fortresses,

[619] "Quelle città, massime, che sono use a vivere libere … con altra quiete stanno contente sotto uno dominio che non veggono … che sotto quello che, veggendo ogni giorno, pare loro che ogni giorno sia rimproverata loro la servitú." *Discorsi* 2.21, p. 191.

but because this was "a city that had always been hostile to the Florentine name, that had always lived in freedom, and that had liberty as a refuge in rebellion, it was necessary to observe the Roman method if they wanted to hold onto it: either make it an ally [*compagna*] or unmake it [*disfarla*]."[620] In *Il Principe* 5, after withdrawing the policy of creating a *stato di pochi*, Machiavelli had presented to the prince two alternative ways of holding under *imperio* a formerly free city: to destroy it or to live there. But here in the *Discorsi* the option of making such a city a *compagna* now appears. The similarity of language, combined with the specific Pisan case study, suggests that Machiavelli is consciously drawing a connection here between his two major works of political theory.[621] So why the discrepancy? The answer, I think, lies in the fact that in the passage quoted above Machiavelli is commenting on *republican* imperialism.[622] The policy of making formerly free states into *compagni* is not available to the prince himself, since previously free peoples will be aware that to be brought under monarchy is to be enslaved. But, as the Roman model demonstrates, a republic *can*—at least for a time—convince other republics that they are partners in both empire and liberty. Yet we have already seen that, on Machiavelli's account, it is doubtful that Rome ever made its Italian neighbours into true *compagni*, because its monopoly on *imperio*, at the very least, placed their liberty in a precarious state that was liable to slide into servitude. It seems that the lesson to learn after reading both *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi* is that a republic should hold formerly free peoples under *imperio* with

[620] "E non conobbero che una città stata sempre inimica del nome fiorentino, vissuta libera, e che ha alla rebellione per rifugio la libertà, era necessario, volendola tenere, osservare il modo romano; o farsela compagna, o disfarla." *Discorsi* 2.24, p. 202.

[621] Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, 128–31.

[622] "But let us come to republics that make fortresses … in the cities [*terre*] that they acquire." *Discorsi* 2.24, p. 202.

a loose grip; indeed, if possible, it should try to persuade them that they retain their liberty. This will discourage such subjects from rebelling. Yet sooner or later rebel they will. This is because, on the one hand, those subjects who know they are no longer free, even if they are ruled with the lightest imperial touch, "cannot let rest the memory of their ancient liberty,"[623] and, on the other, those who are successfully hoodwinked into thinking they remain free will eventually see through their deception. It is at this point that the imperial republic will have to unmake these once free subject cities. Doing so will involve cancelling forever their inhabitants old civic status, either by enslaving them or by forcibly admitting them into a new citizenship. With servitude or citizenship we thus reach the end of republican empire.

This distinctively republican pattern of imperial expansion is elaborated in 2.23 where Machiavelli revisits the issue of dealing with rebellious subjects that he had examined in *Del modo*. In the 1503 text we saw that citizenship was curiously absent from Machiavelli's analysis of Rome's settlement of the Latin War, but in 2.23 the concept is embedded within his theory of empire. Quoting again from the speech Livy gives Camillus, but this time in the original Latin, Machiavelli now makes it clear that "accepting conquered people into citizenship"[624] was an option proposed by the consul. Moreover, when summarizing Livy's account of the settlement itself, which involved the Roman senate deciding to "benefit" (*benificarono*) or "destroy" (*spensono*) each individual Latin community, Machiavelli notes that the "benefited" were given "*la città*," which must mean Roman citizenship, although what form is left unspecified.[625]

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[623] "Nelle republiche è maggiore vita, maggiore odio, piú desiderio di vendetta: né gli lascia, né può lasciare, riposare la memoria della antiqua libertà." *Il Principe* 5, p. 31.

[624] "Victos in civitatem accipiendo." Livy 8.13.16, cited at *Discorsi* 2.23, p. 196.

[625] *Discorsi* 2.23, p. 196.

Interestingly, Machiavelli says here that the grant of citizenship is a means whereby the Romans "secured" (*assicurandogli*) the Latins, but earlier in this discourse, as well as in *Del modo*, he places in opposition the policies of "securing oneself" against a people and "benefiting" them. It seems, then, that the grant of citizenship can be perceived both as a benefit and a security measure.

Machiavelli goes on to say that Florence failed to apply these Roman lessons to the Valdichiana rebellion, again indicating this discourse's intellectual origins in *Del modo*. He then turns, however, to a second Livian episode which was not discussed in the earlier text. Livy records that in 329 BCE Rome granted citizenship to the Privernates.[626] These were a Volscian people whom the Romans had twice defeated in war: once in 357 BCE, when the Privernates came under Roman rule by *deditio*,[627] and again in 330 BCE following their rebellion. When asked in the Roman senate what punishment Privernum deserved for its defection, one of the Privernates' ambassadors stated boldly that his people would only stay faithful to Rome if they were treated as "those who think themselves worthy to be free."[628] This candour impressed the senate, prompting the remark that "only those who think of nothing except liberty are worthy of becoming Romans," and the Privernates were duly admitted into citizenship.[629] And Machiavelli quotes in Latin these passages from Livy's account of the senatorial exchange. Now this might appear to be secure evidence that Machiavelli sees the conferral of citizenship as a means of

[626] Livy 8.20–21.

[627] Livy 7.16.2–6.

[628] "Quam merentur qui se libertate dignos consent." Livy 8.21.3, cited at *Discorsi* 2.23, p. 197.

[629] "Eos demum qui nihil praeterquam de libertate cogitent dignos esse qui Romani fiant." Livy 8.21.9, cited at *Discorsi* 2.23, p. 198.

inducting subject peoples into liberty. But, once again, this is not the conclusion he draws. Instead, he notes that the example of the Privernates should teach rulers something about the obstinacy of "those who are used either to being free or to seeing themselves as being free."[630] Subjects like these must be "destroyed or caressed" (*spegnerle o carezzarle*); failing to do so leads to "frequent rebellions and the ruin of states."[631] Machiavelli's perspective here is that of the imperialist; whether or not subject peoples like the Privernates who are admitted into some form of citizenship really do gain their freedom is never stated. Indeed, it seems that Machiavelli persists in the view that citizenship does not necessarily endow its recipients with a free status.

The version of citizenship that Rome granted the Privernates in 329 BCE is very likely to have been *civitas sine suffragio*.[632] Whether Machiavelli knows this is unclear, but he is certainly aware that many of the states which, in his words, Rome "benefited" with citizenship in the Latin settlement of 338 BCE had also received it in this form, including, as we saw, Capua. Yet Machiavelli observed in *Il Principe* 5 that the Romans were eventually forced to "unmake" Capua in 211 BCE after it had sided with Hannibal five years earlier; as a *formerly* free city, Capua could not forget its liberty and thus seized the opportunity to throw off the Roman yoke. The Campanians, then, despite possessing a variant of the Roman citizenship, and, as we were told in *Discorsi* 2.21, being left for a time to live under their own laws, were never, in Machiavelli's view, free. And if Machiavelli is aware that the Privernates were also admitted into citizenship *sine suffragio*, then it would follow that he can hardly conceptualize them as being

[630] "Quegli che sono usi o a essere o a parere loro essere liberi." *Discorsi* 2.23, p. 198.

[631] "Di che nascano le spesse ribellioni, e le rovine degli stati." *Discorsi* 2.23, p. 198.

[632] Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy*, 620.

free either. The passages of the *Discorsi*, then, which seem most amenable to the interpretation that Machiavelli wants to reserve citizenship as a liberating concept within his theory of empire cannot in fact sustain such a view.

In finding that the grant of citizenship, particularly *civitas sine suffragio*, belonged to the Roman Republic's apparatus of imperial subjection, Machiavelli is in agreement with modern classicists. As Stephen Oakley puts it, the evidence that Livy's text itself furnishes suggests that incorporation by *civitas sine suffragio* "usually followed Roman military action and was imposed upon subjugated peoples. It can scarcely have been a privilege and must have been meant to limit the autonomy of the incorporated states."[633] That Machiavelli refuses to recognize as being free cities such as Capua and Privernum that not only hold a form of Roman citizenship, but might also live under their own laws and retain their "constitutional form" and "dignity," shows just how far he has gone in dismantling the idea of the dependent, yet free, imperial subject. His point in 2.21 that it was the *Romans* who chose to leave subject peoples under their own laws and maintain them in their *stato* and *dignità* is deeply significant. These subjects enjoy their privileges only at Rome's discretion; they occupy a dependent position and therefore cannot be truly free. The elimination of any possibility that a people can be subjected to another people's *imperio* without experiencing servitude indicates that Machiavelli is in possession of a far more uncompromising theory of liberty than that articulated by his humanist predecessors.

I thus want to conclude by suggesting that if the principal innovation that Machiavelli introduces with his theory of empire is to say that one cannot be both subject to an alien *imperio* and free, then we probably need to revise somewhat our understanding of the 'neo-Roman'

[633] Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy*, 550–51.

republican tradition of thinking about liberty; a tradition which Machiavelli is normally thought to inhabit. Very broadly speaking, historians of political thought—as well as modern political theorists—see Roman and neo-Roman republican thinkers as sharing a conception of freedom which consists in independence from an alien agent's *ius*, *potestas*, *dominium*, or some other form of arbitrary authority. But as I hope to have shown, Florentine humanists before Machiavelli, in wanting to assimilate somehow the figure of the dependent foreign subject into their theory of liberty, often adopted a number of classical Roman concepts which combined free and dependent states; peoples in the *dominium* could be both subject to and dependent on Florentine *imperio*, yet nonetheless be said to be free. Machiavelli, however, does not feel the need to perform this conceptual contortion; indeed, his theory of empire deliberately exposes what he sees as a contradiction between subjection to a foreign *imperio* and liberty. On his account, a people can be left almost entirely to its own devices, even maintain an unaltered juridical status, yet if it is dependent on a foreign agent's *imperio* then it must be unfree. This is because Machiavelli thinks that the power of sovereign command *is* a form of arbitrary authority when a *popolo* holds it over anyone other than itself; one may choose to command subjects harshly or mildly, but this is a matter of judgement, not obligation. Machiavelli thus remains to the end entirely unpersuaded by the argument that any ethical force—such as that supposedly radiating from a Ciceronian-type imperial protectorate—can transform the *imperio* held by both the prince himself and the imperial republic when it is the *principe* of subjects into anything other than what it really is: the rule of a master over slaves.

Conclusion

The underlying historiographical purpose of this dissertation has been not only to contribute to the slender, yet nonetheless insightful, body of scholarship which addresses the topic of empire in Renaissance republican thought, but also to introduce into it a greater degree of complexity. Specifically, I have tried to highlight some of the inadequacies of imposing, as the scholarly literature has tended to, a monolithic humanist tradition of imperial republicanism that can be distilled into the statement: "liberty at home, empire abroad." As I have demonstrated, Florentine humanists were in fact often anxious to insist that Florence respected the liberty of its subjects in the *dominium*. Far from finding glory simply in the extension of imperial rule, early Florentine humanism developed a conception of empire that was explicitly concerned with nurturing and protecting the liberty of foreign peoples and states. Indeed, the humanists even advanced the claim that Florence had liberated its neighbours from servitude. I have argued that it is the ethical content of this specific idea of empire that Machiavelli eviscerates in his political thought, particularly in the *Discorsi*, where we saw him constructing a theory of republican empire that has no humanist parallel in its frankness about the enslaving nature of imperial politics. As we have noted, Machiavelli occupies an important place in the work of a number of preeminent intellectual historians of early modern imperial thinking, including Mikael Hörnqvist, Richard Tuck, David Armitage, and Diego Panizza, all of whom associate him with a largely uniform

'humanist' tradition.[634] However, we should now be able to see that two very different Renaissance stories have in fact been blurred into one: the current historiography has subsumed Machiavelli into a body of thinking that he is actually subverting.

This confusion may have been caused in part by the fact that early modern theorists themselves often rode rather cavalierly through the two fields of imperial thinking that I have tried to demarcate. I want to conclude this dissertation by glancing at the works of two influential early modern theorists of empire who had this dual Renaissance legacy in front of them: Alberico Gentili, who was writing his treatises on international law towards the end of the sixteenth century, and James Harrington, whose *Oceana* was published in the middle of the following century. I suggest that we can clarify our understanding of these texts if we begin to disentangle within them the more authentically neo-Roman, and particularly neo-Ciceronian, strands of imperial thinking from the distinctively Machiavellian ones.

Alberico Gentili, Regius Professor of Civil Law at the University of Oxford from 1587 until his death in 1608, has been called in the modern scholarly literature both a humanist and an admirer of Machiavelli. And these labels are up to a point perfectly accurate; Gentili was without question steeped in the classical tradition and went out of his way to express his approval for Machiavelli's republicanism.[635] However, some leading Gentili scholars, most notably Diego Panizza, have in their studies conflated humanist and Machiavellian approaches to empire, and in

[634] I cite the relevant bibliography in the Introduction.

[635] On Gentili's humanism, see Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 16–50. For Gentili's evident familiarity with Machiavelli's works, including the *Discorsi*, see Sydney Anglo, *Machiavelli – The First Century. Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 367–68. Gentili praises the *Discorsi* in his *De legationibus*, first published in 1585: Alberico Gentili, *De legationibus libri tres*, trans. Gordon L. Laing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924), 3.9, pp. 155–56.

doing so blunted our sense of Gentili's position with respect to his Renaissance inheritance.[636] Panizza has detected the influence of a homogenized humanist-Machiavellian tradition in Gentili's best known work of international jurisprudence, *De iure belli* (1598): "the moral vision of politics underpinning the *De Iure Belli* is fundamentally conditioned by Machiavelli."[637] Panizza clarifies his point by noting Gentili's participation in *De iure belli* in a "moralistic humanism of Machiavellian descent," which he further describes as "the orthodox humanist perspective of the early Renaissance, a perspective advocating the legitimacy of the pursuit of glory and imperial power and therefore recognizing a similar moral right to … enemies."[638] Not only does Panizza see this humanist-Machiavellian tradition at work in *De iure belli*, but he also identifies its presence in Gentili's *De armis Romanis* (1599), a pair of pro and contra speeches on the justice of Rome's imperial wars. In addressing this topic in this format, Gentili was presenting his own version of the 'Carneadean' debate staged by Cicero in *De republica* that we examined in Chapter One. Panizza suggests that Gentili's own views in this work coincide with those of the "Roman" speaker whom he has deliver the second, lengthier speech in favour of the justice of Rome's imperial expansion. According to Panizza, Gentili saw the Roman empire as "a sort of 'utopia' … that could still provide the paradigm for the construction of a just

[636] As well as in the works of Panizza cited below, this issue is evident in Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 13: "the ideas of Machiavelli about the relationships between cities were not very different from those of many apparently more orthodox humanists, and many humanist jurists [e.g. Gentili] followed their lead." See also Pärtel Piirimäe, "Alberico Gentili's Doctrine of Defensive War and its Impact on Seventeenth-Century Normative Views," in *The Roman Foundations*, ed. Kingsbury and Straumann, 187–209, at 194.

[637] Panizza, "Political Theory and Jurisprudence," 11. For more on Panizza's view of the relationship between Machiavelli and Gentili, see Diego Panizza, "Machiavelli e Alberico Gentili," *Il Pensiero Politico* 2.3 (1969): 476–83. Here Panizza shows that Gentili quotes, without acknowledgment, a passage from *Discorsi* 3.43 in *De legationibus* 1.8.

[638] Panizza, "Political Theory and Jurisprudence," 20.

'international/global order' in the new conditions of the modern world." In presenting this case, Panizza argues, Gentili was expressing "views of the 'just empire'" that were "fundamentally in line with Machiavelli's tradition of republican imperialism."[639] What I want to stress, however, is that *De armis Romanis* is a text in which Gentili, in light of Renaissance developments, is quite capable of entertaining, and even endorsing, competing conceptual and argumentative approaches to the problem of empire; in fact, there could hardly be a better demonstration of the tensions within Renaissance and early modern currents of thinking about Rome's imperial project than that presented by *De armis Romanis*.

It is understandable why Panizza finds Gentili siding with the defender of the justice of Roman imperialism in Book Two of *De armis Romanis*. For if Gentili were to reveal himself to be, on balance, more sympathetic to the case against the Romans made in the work's opening book, then he would surely be undermining his elaborate project in *De iure belli* to quarry the Roman legal texts for normative principles of international justice. Nonetheless, David Lupher, *pace* Panizza, has raised some serious doubts about the extent to which we can straightforwardly identify Gentili with his Roman advocate.[640] Lupher maintains that Gentili must have thought that at least some of the arguments he had the so-called "Picenus" advance in Book One were potentially winning; in fact, Lupher shows that a few of them are also present in *De iure belli*. It would, then, be a mistake to see Picenus as a strawman set up by Gentili only to be torn down by his Roman opponent.

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[639] Panizza, "Gentili's *De armis Romanis*," in *The Roman Foundations*, ed. Kingsbury and Straumann, 83.

[640] David Lupher, "The *De armis Romanis* and the Exemplum of Roman Imperialism," in *The Roman Foundations*, ed. Kingsbury and Straumann, 84–100.

I do not want to weigh in on the specifics of this scholarly debate; I merely want to point out that part of the reason why we may want to see Gentili as sometimes holding genuinely ambivalent views on various practical, legal, and moral issues associated with the topic of empire is that such an ambivalence would have been transmitted to him through the Italian Renaissance. On the one hand, Gentili was clearly familiar with the neo-Roman argument that the Roman Republic had brought liberty to its imperial dependents. But on the other, it is hard to believe that, as a committed reader of the *Discorsi*, he could have failed to notice Machiavelli's repeated insistence in the text that the Romans had enslaved the subjects of their empire. At the very least, Gentili must have seen that Machiavelli does not redeploy the legal and moral arguments of the classical and humanist authorities who had advocated for the justice of Rome's imperial growth; indeed, as I have tried to show in this dissertation, Machiavelli's mode of analysis of imperial questions is entirely unmoored from anything resembling a conventional Roman or neo-Roman juridical-ethical basis.

Turning to the text of *De armis Romanis*, we find Gentili's Picenus accusing the Romans of establishing their imperial rule through repeated acts of injustice, one of which was robbing conquered peoples of their liberty. Indeed, Picenus notes in his concluding remarks that it was not until the fall of the Roman empire that the world was "freed from lamentable servitude" (*servituti subtractus lamentabili*).[641] What is striking is that Picenus presses his case by consciously undercutting a number of prominent classical Roman arguments that had resurfaced in the Italian Renaissance. Of particular interest to us is the fact that Gentili has Picenus flatly

[641] Alberico Gentili, *The Wars of the Romans. A Critical Edition and Translation of* De armis Romanis, ed. Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann, trans. David Lupher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.13, p. 118. My quotations of *De armis Romanis* follow Lupher's translation.

reject the Ciceronian point that the Roman Republic gained its imperial authority through protecting other peoples:

> 'By defending its allies our people have now gotten control over all the lands,' as was Cicero's testimony. As if *this* were defending: if one overthrew everyone and carried off everything for yourself alone. This is that protection [*patrocinium*] of the whole world that Cicero likewise discusses—if you deprive the world of its liberty and subject it to your own domination.[642]

Gentili's Picenus thus attempts to demolish the patronal vision of empire whose early Renaissance recovery we witnessed in this dissertation's opening chapter.

However, Gentili does not abandon the vision in Book Two; in fact, he has his Roman advocate reassert the claim that the Romans presided over an empire based on a benevolent patron-client model. The Roman speaker notes in the book's opening chapter, for instance, that "the peoples of Asia" were liberated from tyranny and "carried off into the security and patronage [*clientela*] of the Roman people."[643] And in the same chapter Gentili has the Roman articulate the language of manumission when discussing the Roman Republic's foreign policy in the Greek East: "Greece having been declared free and Macedonia redeemed from servitude will certainly bring the crown and palm of valor to their avengers and liberators."[644] Finally, in the

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[642] "*Noster populus sociis defendendis, terrarum iam omnium potitus est*: ut erat Ciceronis testimonium. Atque ut hoc est defendere, si evertas omnes, et cuncta rapias ad te unum. Hoc est patrocinium, quod itidem Cicero iactat, orbis terrae, si orbem terrae exsuas libertate, dominationi tuae subiicias." Gentili, *The Wars of the Romans* 1.10, p. 82.

[643] "Asiaticae gentes … raptae in fidem, et clientelam populi Romani." Gentili, *The Wars of the Romans* 2.1, p. 128.

[644] "Graecia in libertatem asserta, Macedonia de servitude vindicata deferent certe suis vindicibus, atque liberatoribus hanc coronam, et palmam virtutis." Gentili, *The Wars of the Romans* 2.1, p. 130.

text's concluding chapter, we find patronal language again being used to describe Rome's imperial relationships: the Roman boasts that "we received into our friendship and protection" (*in amicitiam, fidemque recepimus*) the city-states of Sicily.[645] We can, then, see at play in *De armis Romanis* some of the same legitimating concepts that Florentine humanists had employed in their attempts to reconcile liberty and empire. Yet, in giving a lengthy hearing to the case that Rome had enslaved its subject populations, Gentili was also in some sense treading a Machiavellian path. All the same, we must remember that Gentili's concern throughout the text to assess Roman imperialism against a fairly orthodox set of legal and moral criteria is utterly alien to Machiavelli's approach in the *Discorsi*.

Whereas in *De armis Romanis* we find a Ciceronian conception of empire opposing a Machiavellian-like position on what the Roman Republic's imperial expansion actually meant for foreign peoples, in James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656) the neo-Roman and Machiavellian lines of thinking become tightly enmeshed. David Armitage has rightly emphasized the importance of the fact that Harrington, writing under the Cromwellian Protectorate, articulates in *Oceana* an explicitly Ciceronian vision of empire as patronage.[646] Yet, as we can now appreciate, Harrington was actually developing an argument that Florentine humanists had revived over two and a half centuries earlier. Armitage also reports that Harrington invokes Cicero and Machiavelli in the same breath when discussing the ideal model that the Roman Republic offers a commonwealth with expansionist ambitions.[647] In an interesting textual slippage, Harrington

[645] Gentili, *The Wars of the Romans* 2.13, p. 337.

[646] David Armitage, "The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire," *Historical Journal* 35.3 (1992): 531–55, at 551–52; Armitage, *The Ideological Origins*, 137–38.

[647] Armitage, "The Cromwellian Protectorate," 551–52; Armitage, *The Ideological Origins*, 137–38.

misquotes Cicero as having said in *De officiis* that the Romans undertook, not the "*patrocinium*," but the "*patronatus*" of the world, suggesting that Rome had unshackled the globe from slavery.[648] Harrington then explains—while explicitly reproducing parts of Machiavelli's analysis in the *Discorsi* of Rome's imperial growth—that the Romans created an empire of freedom: "in confirming of liberty, she propagated her empire."[649]

By the mid-seventeenth century, then, it had become possible to erase what we have seen to be the very sharp dividing line between a Ciceronian and a Machiavellian philosophical approach to empire. Was Harrington, in amalgamating the Ciceronian and Machiavellian materials, simply misunderstanding, casually ignoring, or deliberately suppressing the fundamental differences between his sources? Whatever Harrington was doing, it is clear that Machiavelli does not point us back to a Roman theory of republican imperialism underpinned by Ciceronian moral philosophy. Instead, he challenges us to look with him down a road leading to empire and liberty for some, but for others, it would seem inescapably, to servitude.

[648] James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 221.

[649] Harrington, *Oceana*, 223.

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