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Machiavelli's Republic: A Better Place to Be

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Abstract:

Machiavelli is an underappreciated figure. He is either viewed as an unprincipled, but very Italian figure or treated more fairly, but viewed as a generic European or even Anglicized. This article views Machiavelli as distinctly Italian and as an inheritor of the classical republicanism of Rome on one hand and Aristotle on the other. This article attempts both to explain the modern theory of republicanism and its ancient roots to a wider, more diverse audience and to present Macohiavelli as an Italian thinker, as opposed to as a European thinker. This project is both about ensuring that classical republican is available to persons from all cultures and backgrounds, but also de-Europeanize and de-Anglicize the cultural assumptions around Machiavelli. He is thus best understood as uniquely and irreducibly Italian and also part of a universal movement towards better government. At a time in which majoritarian democracies are out of control all over the world, the checks and balances inherent in classical republicanism serve both as a counterweight and also as a complement to modern democracy.

Keywords:

Italian political theory; republicanism; Machiavelli; political freedom; political regimes

I. Introduction

Machiavelli is often a misunderstood figure. He is often viewed as either unprincipled, a supporter of dictators, or a look-warm supporter of republics. However, recently, scholars such as J.G.A. Pocock, Philip Pettit, and Maurizio Viroli have looked at him in a different way. This is the "republican" school of interpreting Machiavelli. This article argues that this school of interpretation, is an insightful way of looking at Machiavelli.

II. Review of Literature

J.G.A. Pocock is very instrumental in disabusing us of our everyday usage of the words "republic" and "republicanism" when we are talking in political theory terms. Pocock says explicitly that Machiavelli had a different, deeper way of thinking about political regimes in mind. He says: "Machiavelli himself wrote (The Prince, chapter 1) that "states" could be classified as either republics or principalities, and from this we see that he found it possible to use "republic" as the opposite of single-person government." He then goes on later in the same passage to clarify this statement by saying: "He was not, however, a critic or analyst of kingship, or even of monarchy, if by that term we mean the form of rule developed in the territorial kingdoms of Spain, France, or England, and it would be a mistake to associate him with a "republicanism" whose opposite was "monarchism" in any generalized form. (Pocock, J.G.A. 2010. "Machiavelli and Rome: The republic as ideal and as history", in J. Najemy (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli* (Cambridge Companions to Literature, pp. 144-156. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 144-145.)"

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Pocock helps us get out of our own cultural trap when it comes to looking at republicanism, republics, and Machiavelli. He also introduces us to classical republicanism. Classical republicanism is not simply a "republic" verses a "monarchy", as Pocock persuasively argues above. It is also substantively motivated against the rule of any one person, which again Pocock makes clear. Machiavelli's simple dichotomy of republic and principality has to do with power and not merely legitimacy. Philip Pettit makes our understanding of classical republicanism and Machiavelli clearer than simply reading Pocock's excellent article.

Pettit is interested in the history of political thought, as is Pocock. However, Pettit's seminal work, *Republicanism*, is more a piece of pure political theory than a work of intellectual history, unlike the article of Pocock's making. Pettit argues that classical republicanism is about the ethics of non-domination. Domination, as defined by one author's assessment, is the denial of the rule of law to a group or individual in a systematic (not merely systemic) way. Classical republicanism seeks to prevent domination by a number of mechanisms, such as checks and balances on any one institution's power (Binetti, Christopher. *A Better Place to Be* (dissertation). 2016. University of Maryland: College Park, 20 and Pettit, Philip. 1997. *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford, U.K. and New York: Oxford University Press, in its entirety).

Pettit speaks of republicanism, in its form of classical republicanism, early on in his seminal work, *Republicanism*. In just two sentences, he describes classical republicanism's history in a deeply impressive way. He says: "This tradition had its origins in classical Rome, being associated in particular with the name of Cicero. It was resurrected in the Renaissance, featuring powerfully in the constitutional thinking of Machiavelli, and it played an important role in the self-conception of the northern Italian republics: the first modern European polities (Pettit, Philip 1997, 19-20)."

Pettit connects Machiavelli to classical republicanism in a more direct, clearer way than does Pocock, but both seem to agree with the thesis that Machiavelli is a classical republican. Checks and balances on power are a key element of classical republicanism. The checks are not there to be a nuisance, but to prevent domination. Pettit and Pocock most likely see Aristotle as part of the same classical republican tradition, however, the present author without doubt believes this to be true. Cicero seems to be more emphasized at times by both Pettit and Pocock, however, the present author feels that Aristotle influenced Cicero and so in the end, Aristotle influenced Machiavelli, directly or indirectly (Pocock 2010, 144-156 and Pettit, 19-20; also, Binetti 2016, 15).

Maurizio Viroli argues persuasively that Machiavelli was influenced by Aristotle and Cicero, but that he did not base his own judgments on their authority. Instead, as Viroli says:

He was a restorer, an interpreter, a narrator, and an orator. He laboured to restore and to add new beauty to Roman republican political wisdom, to understand the sense of political processes of his own times, and to tell stories to remind his contemporaries of the political ideals they had forgotten (Viroli, Maurizio. 1998. *Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought: Machiavelli*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1-4, quotation from page 1)."

This fits in well with the idea that Machiavelli is part of the classical republican tradition. As the present author argued in his dissertation, Aristotle was more Roman than Greek in his thinking and this explains why he was so influential in Rome and Italy (Binetti

2016, 21). That tradition involved division of power, checks and balances, and a commitment to the rule of law. In fact, classical republicanism connects political virtue to the rule of law. As Viroli says: "Hence to interpret Machiavelli's theory of political virtue without connecting it to the rule of law ignores the sense both of his interpretation of political virtue and of his republicanism (Viroli 1998, 5).

III. Research Methods

Thus, this article will argue that the republican school of Machiavelli is fundamentally correct in interpreting Machiavelli as a classical republican. The present author will argue that he was heavily influenced by Aristotle, through the Roman-Italian republican tradition. I will also argue that the best alternative to this perspective, that he is a selfish republican, is less persuasive that the republican perspective of Machiavelli.

There is another school of thought about Machiavelli and his relationship with classical republicanism. Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov, the excellent translation team that has produced the best English translation of *the Discourses*, who do not discount *the Prince* as facetious or coerced, Chapters One and two of *the Prince* must be problematic. This is the skeptical school of Machiavelli or the semi-republicans. This school asks the question: Is Machiavelli a selfish republican? Nathan Tarcov in particular challenges the idea that Machiavelli is a classical republican. He argues that Machiavelli is a selfish Republican. As amazing as so much of Tarcov's work, especially his translation of *the Discourses* is, he is fundamentally misdiagnosing Machiavelli here. First of all, Tarcov talks about enlightened self-interest and selfishness as if they are the same thing. It is easy to argue that they are not the same thing. Enlightened self-interest could be as simple as understanding that everyone's freedoms, in a small polity, are interconnected and that if others suffer a loss of political freedom and personal freedoms, so will I. However, that does not imply selfishness per se (Tarcov, Nathan. 2021. *Personal Correspondence*).

Also, Tarcov is making many assumptions about Machiavelli's own psychology that I would not make. For example, he argues that Machiavelli views the world from his own perspective primarily. We could call that self-centeredness. In common parlance (and in the Mansfield and Turco worldview) self-centeredness is equal to selfishness. However, that makes a false assumption (Tarcov 2021).

However, Machiavelli's invocation of virtue, while different in many ways from classical virtue, has its commonalities. Participation, civic-mindedness, the willingness to fight and die for the state and the willingness to share power with others are all common grounds between classical republican virtues and Machiavelli's virtues. Machiavelli's republicanism is hard to tell apart from classical republicanism broadly speaking, because I would argue, it is a form of classical republicanism broadly speaking (Capponi, Niccolò. 2010. *An Unlikely Prince: The Life and Times of Machiavelli,* in its entirety).

First of all, Machiavelli writes in Chapter Two of *the Prince*, "Io lascerò indrieto el ragionare delle repubbliche, perché altra volta ne ragionai a lungo" (Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Il Principe*, ed. by Luigi Firpo. Firenze: 1971. An E-Text by Liber Liber. Accessed at https://www.liberliber.it/mediateca/libri/m/machiavelli/il_principe/pdf/machiavelli_il_principe.pdf on 3/23/2021, 13-14). "I will leave alone reasoning on republics, because another time I reasoned on them a long time". This is clearly a reference to *the Discourses*. *The Discourses* is a large work of three books and over five hundred digital pages. The Prince is the non-fiction version of a novella and a little over one hundred digital pages. He clearly wrote much

more about republics than principalities. I argue that he liked republics more so he had much more to say.

Also, in Chapter One of *the Prince*, he talks about the kinds of principalities, one of which is created by individuals in states where the people are "usi ad essere liberi" (used to being free) (Machiavelli (Il Principe) 1971, 13). It seems strange that Mansfield and Tarcov can even entertain that Machiavelli has anything but despite for princes when they read this line. Machiavelli talks about freedom more in the Discourses than in *the Prince*, because *the Prince* is about states without freedom. However, Machiavelli is not arguing against freedom anywhere in either work. In other words, Machiavelli is pro-freedom, at least as he conceptualizes it.

So, if a Prince takes away freedom and Machiavelli loves freedom, then *the Prince* in *the Prince* is actually the bad guy. Thus, Mansfield and Tarcov are right in an odd sense. They argue that *the Prince* and *the Discourses* are consistent with one another. They mean that Machiavelli is not a full or classical republican, that he at least tolerates principalities. However, by looking at just the first two chapters of *the Prince*, the foundation of it, we can clearly see that he actually loathes principalities, which is consistent with his position in *the Discourses.*

To summarize the argument against Machiavelli being a selfish republican, self-centeredness is not selfishness per se. Any reasonable person would like to be free, Machiavelli would argue. Is this not true? Any reasonable person would like to be able to participate politics, says Machiavelli. Is this not true? Any reasonable person would not like to die, be enslaved, or suffer the destruction of one's city or civilization, Machiavelli argues. Is this not true? There is absolutely nothing selfish about Machiavelli being self-centered when his whole civilization is under threat. It is simply implausible that Machiavelli is a selfish republican

IV. Discussion

Let us begin our discussion of the evidence in favor of the thesis that Machiavelli is a classical republican at the beginning of *the Discourses*, Chapter One of Book One of *the Discourses*. Let us look at the title of Chapter One. The original Italian title is: Quali siano stati universalmente i principii di qualunque città, e quale fusse quello di Roma. The leading English translation, Mansfield and Tarcov, is: *What Have Been Universally the Beginnings of Any City Whatever, and What Was That of Rome.* How close are the two? (Machiavelli, Niccolò, trans. by Mansfield, Harvey C. and Nathan Tarcov. 1996. *Discourses on Livy*. University of Chicago Press, 7 and Machiavelli, Niccolò 1971, 20).

As the English translation implies, the original title was a run-on question. It is a compound sentence, with two important semantic portions. First, is the universal case, that is, what happens in general and the second is the particular case, that is what happens with the primary subject of the inquiry. This is, even if Machiavelli were not aware of it, a classical Aristotelian type of formulation. There is a general case and then particular cases that either show a general tendency or are exceptions to a general rule. In this case, the English title asserts that the important phenomenon being analyzed in the chapter is the plural idea of "beginnings of a city" (Aristotle, trans. Benjamin Jowett. 350 B.C. *Politics.* Accessed at http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.4.four.html on 10/11/2021, Book iV, Parts V-VII).

The key word is thus "beginnings" in the English text and its proposed equivalent, "principii" in the Italian. I argue that while the English translation is technically correct, one could argue that the resulting interpretation is still a bad one. Principii is an obsolete spelling of principi, the plural of principio, which many meanings in modern and early modern Italian. It can mean beginning and principle. He used an ambiguous term in order to say two things with one word. He is talking about the beginnings of the city but also its moral foundations (its principles). Machiavelli was obsessed with the idea of the founding of a city and here is talking about two kinds of foundations, literal and moral (Machiavelli, Niccolò, trans. by Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, 7 and Machiavelli, Niccolò 1971, 20.).

This leads to some modification in my translation of the original title, as opposed to that of Mansfield and Tarcov. Now, let us look at the rest of the translation. The translators interpret "Quali siano stati" as "What have been" as opposed to "What were they", referring to the "principii". I actually think that the translators have the better translation. By turning "siano stati" into were, we make it sound as if Machiavelli is thinking in static terms. That would be exactly the wrong direction. Instead, the translators translate him, correctly, as talking in more dynamic, changing terms. This encapsulates the active, founding action that gets at the very heart of Machiavelli's worldview. So, I kept "Quali siano stati" as What have been".

The translators translate the first part of the compound, run-on sentence as "What Have Been Universally the Beginnings of Any City Whatever". The translators clearly as correct in translating "universalmente" as "universally". I have already mentioned how I differ in terms of translating "principii". There are at least two ways, again, that we can translate the phrase "di qualunque città". The source that I consulted online suggested "on any city". However, I again actually agree with Mansfield and Tarcov that this misses the point of Machiavelli's worldview. I could go with "of whatever city", however, the translators' "of any city whatever" seems the best and close enough to al iteral translation to be acceptable. They translate it as "What Was That of Rome". There is no sense of the subjunctive in the English translation, however "quale fusse quello di Roma" uses "fusse" an obsolete spelling of fosse, which is a subjunctive imperfect form of essere (to be) (Machiavelli, Niccolò, trans. by Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, 7 and Machiavelli, Niccolò (*Discorsi*) 1971, 20).

The subjunctive imperfect in Machiavelli is more like a conditional (although he uses the conditional at times. Because, the subjunctive is so important in Italian and so unused and often unknown in English, I decided that using a conditional reading of the subjunctive as opposed to an indicative one is better. I then realized that I made a mistake with siano stati, and did not recognize the words are subjunctive. They are not in the imperfect, but a subjunctive version of the passato prossimo. However, they are in the subjunctive. Thus, I had to modify my original interpretation of the entire first half of the compound sentence. Instead of "What Have Been Universally The First Principles of any City Whatever". I modified it to "What Could Have Been Universally The First Principles of any City Whatever". I then translated the second part of the compound sentence as "What Could Be That of Rome". While neither version had a question mark, I believe that the punctuation was implied and is useful in a modern rendering of the text.

I translate the first chapter title "Quali siano stati universalmente i principii di qualunque città, e quale fusse quello di Roma?" as "What could have been universally the first principles of any city whatever and what could be that of Rome?". "What could have been universally the first principles of any city whatever and what could be that of Rome?" could be controversial, however is conveys correctly Machiavelli's speculative, even

philosophical tone in the title of the first chapter of Book 1 of *The Discourses*. It is obviously not an indicative sense such as "What were the first principles of any city whatever and what was that of Rome": or in the present, like "What are the first principles of any city whatever and what is that of Rome?" Instead, he is looking at the past, although I did ultimately translate the last part as in the present. "Siano stati" and fusse" are in different tenses and any translation needs to do the same thing.

The rest of Chapter 1, supports the translation and interpretation of the title of Chapter One. In the first substantive sentence of Chapter One, the differences between my translation and interpretation and those of Mansfield and Tarcov build upon each other and begin to become more pronounced (Machiavelli, Niccolò, trans. by Mansfield, Harvey C. and Nathan Tarcov 1996, 7 and Machiavelli, Niccolò (*Discorsi*) 1971, 20-21).

The original Italian reads:

Coloro che leggeranno quale principio fusse quello della città di Roma, e da quali latori di leggi e come ordinato, non si maraviglieranno che tanta virtù si sia per più secoli mantenuta in quella città; e che dipoi ne sia nato quello imperio al quale quella republica aggiunse.

The Manfield and Tarcov translation into English reads:

Those who read what the beginning was of the city of Rome and by what legislators and how it was ordered will not marvel that so much virtue was maintained for many centuries in that city, and that afterward the empire that the republic attained arose there.

My translation with changes in Italics:

Those who *will* read what *could have been* the *first principle* of the city of Rome, and by what *bearers of the law* and how *ordered*, will not marvel that so much virtue *maintained itself* for *more* centuries *in that city*; and that afterward*s was born* the empire *to which that republic added*.

"Bearers of the law" is the literal translation and the one that feels best in this situation. I was divided upon what to do until I saw that footnote which I view as license by the authors to disagree with their translation. This version is not as "clear" or "simple". These authors are going for readability; I am going for truth. The two versions are thus caused by differing motives. "Bearers of the law" is a much better translation than legislators, because the term "legislators" implies a one-way relationship between the law and the people who make the laws.

I argue that "bearer of the laws" refers to Aristotle and Machiavelli's notion of the rulers also being the ruled; i.e. subject to the laws that they make. The idea that these founding lawmakers were subject to the law and thus devotees of the rule of law is an important one for Machiavelli and I argue, central not just to his construction of Chapter One but his republican worldview through the six foundational chapters of *the Discourses* (Aristotle *The Politics*, Book III 1275 b, 20 and Book VI 1317b 1.).

While there are other differences in my translation, the only really important one for this opening sentence is how I translate "si sia per più secoli mantenuta in quella città". Manfield and Tarcov translate this part of the sentence as "was maintained for many centuries in that city". Of course, we are talking about virtue. I translate this as "maintained itself for more centuries in that city". First of all, I feel that my translation

captures the subjunctive better than does their translation. Also, they drop the reflexive sense of the sentence by getting rid of "si" which is a reflexive pronoun. I also replaced "many" for "more" because my term is more precise.

What Machiavelli is getting at here is that the virtue maintained itself in the city for more centuries (longer) than in her peer polities of the time and more so than most polities historically. He is not making a general claim of "many centuries" but has a comparative sense in the sentence that is being lost the translators here. If we interpret the whole sentence as translated here (by myself), we see that Machiavelli is saying that there is a cause and an effect (again very Aristotelian). The cause was tripartite; the first principle of the city, the bearers of the law, and how the city was ordered. In other words, the principle (in literal and figurative senses), the first citizens, who both bear the burden of the law and are empowered to make the law, and the constitution of the political institutions of the city (Machiavelli, Niccolò, trans. by Mansfield, Harvey C. and Nathan Tarcov 1996, 7 and Machiavelli, Niccolò 1971, 20).

Machiavelli is praising the foundations of the city for Rome's virtue and success, which is the effect caused by the tripartite causes he lists above. Essentially, in political scientific language, the institutions and principles of the first generations of Romans are responsible for the success of Rome's institutions and citizens later on in its history. Proceeding to the rest of the first paragraph of Chapter One, I do not have large objections to the translation. However, I do wish to describe my understanding of the paragraph, since it is important to understanding Machiavelli's republicanism. Machiavelli is Aristotelian in that he views the founding of the city as natural- cities come together in the first case when native people form cities in order to protect themselves from a common threat. This also sounds much like social contract theory, of which Machiavelli is an earlier

At this point, Machiavelli's republicanism starts to come into view. He cares about the first principle for which the city is founded. When it comes to the core of political thought, Machiavelli is more of an Aristotelian than anything else. In the six-regime typology, two dimensions are used. First, we have number, but we also have the bad/good regime distinction. So, we have "Principato", "Ottimati" and "Governo Popolare". Then, we have tyranny, the rule of the few (pochi in Italian), and licentiousness. Machiavelli is explicit that the good forms deteriorate into the bad forms. He is ambivalent about whether the good forms are truly good, since they cannot be sustained, but he agrees with the classical republicans that the good regimes are better than the bad regimes, which are inherently corrupt. Here, there is a lot of interesting stuff to discuss. Machiavelli, knowingly or not, is paraphrasing Aristotle's very famous six-regime typology in *the Politics*. Aristotle's good regimes are Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Polity. His three bad regimes are Tyranny, Oligarchy, and Democracy. None of these regime types means exactly the same in Aristotle as they do in Machiavelli, but the resemblance is strong and deeply suggestive of direct or indirect influence (Aristotle, Pol. 4.1289a (Book IV, Part II in MIT version), in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes, Vol. 21*, translated by H. Rackham. 1944. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, accessed at the Perseus Project at Tufts University and Aristotle, trans. Benjamin Jowett. 350 B.C. *Politics.* Accessed at http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.4.four.html on 10/11/2021; and Machiavelli, Niccolò, trans. by Mansfield, Harvey C. and Nathan Tarcov 1996, 11 and 13).

Machiavelli most diverges from the Aristotelian six-part regime-type scheme in the third part, the regimes of the many. Machiavelli speaks of Popular Government, which then slips into Licentiousness. Again, he uses strategic use of linguistic ambiguity, since he implies throughout Chapter Two, not just in this part or it, that Popular Government, like the other two regime systems, has a good and bad regime that are intimately linked. However,

Aristotle's terms are Polity and Democracy. In one English translation, that of Lerner and Detmold, one of Machiavelli's terms, which means "popular" in English, is incorrectly rendered as "democratic", when the term simply does not appear in Machiavelli's political terminology. (Machiavelli, Niccolò ed. by Max Lerner and trans. by Christian E. Detmold. 1950. *The Prince and the Discourses (The Discourses)*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 111 and Aristotle. *The Politics*, trans. by Carnes Lord, First Edition.1984. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Book III, sections 1-8 and Book IV, sections 1-7.).

The difference between the good and the bad regimes in Aristotle's *Politics* is that the good regimes rule for the benefit of the whole while the bad regimes rule for the benefit only of the ruling class. In the first section of the six-regime typology, Machiavelli is in step with Aristotle. The good prince rules for the benefit of the whole community, while the virtuous aristocrats rule on behalf of everyone in the city-state (Aristotle 1984, Books III and IV, in summary. Machiavelli trans. Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, 12-13.).

Imagine, if you will, in the beginning, before civilization, humans were few and scattered. Then there were more of them and they were in closer proximity to one another. They formed a tribe of people and realized that they needed a leader. So, they elected the best man to rule the tribe. Over time this tribe evolved into an early state. However, the good king that they elected died and was succeeded based on hereditary succession. Eventually a bad king rose to power and he was unpopular. Seeing his own unpopularity, he starts to repress the people and becomes a tyrant. The best non-royals gather together and overthrow the king. They then agree that no one person should rule, but instead that all of the best people should rule jointly and that the state should be a public thing (republic) rather than a private thing (principality). Then, over generations, the best people's descendants become complacent and corrupt and simply are the wealthiest and most powerful people. The common people grow angry at this and as the wealthy become concerned for their position, they grow tyrannical in their own way. This leads to a popular revolution. The people then exclude the wealthy from power and rule the State as best they can for a while. But over several generations, they become complacent and their descendants lose all restraint and oppress the wealthy through their own licentiousness. Then anarchy occurs and eventually a new king or prince takes power, starting the cycle or circle all over again. Often, the cycle is disrupted because a better and stronger State arrives and takes it over. However, if left to its own devices, a State will either go around and around in this cycle or destroy itself utterly as a State and people (Machiavelli, Niccolò, Harvey C. Mansfield, and Nathan Tarcov. *Discourses on Livy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 13).

The above thought experiment is a paraphrased version of Machiavelli's cycle or circle of regimes in Chapter Two of Book One of the *Discourses*. It is the core of his political theory, not just early on in *the Discourses*, but throughout his writings and the whole discussion of his values and beliefs should begin with it. I argue that Machiavelli is not just a republican, but a classical republican and that any analysis of his republicanism should begin here with the cycle of regimes.

He believes that all of the six regime types in his six-regime type discussion and in his circle of regimes allegory are doomed to about the same duration and there is one regime that is fundamentally different from the other six regimes, that at least can last a very long time, the duration of which in part makes it the best practicable regime. This regime, he is argues, just after talking about the cycle of regimes, is a mixture of Principality, the Optima, and Popular Government. He argues that the mixture of the one, the few, and the many is the best practicable regime (Machiavelli, Niccolò trans. by Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, 11-13.).

However, he is clear that the three elements of the regime check and balance each other, which leads to political freedom for everyone. I first noticed this part of his post-allegorical analysis by reading the otherwise very flawed English translation by Lerner and Detmold from 1950. They have Machiavelli say:

"In fact, when there is combined under the same constitution a prince, a nobility and the power of the people, then these three powers will watch and keep each other reciprocally in check(Machiavelli, Niccolò, ed. by Max Lerner and trans. by Christian E. Detmold. 1950. *The Prince and the Discourses (The Discourses).* New York: McGraw-Hill, 115.)."

I wanted to see how Mansfield and Tarcov translated the same passage. I had difficulty finding the cognate passage in Mansfield and Tarcov, which was not a good sign. However, here is the closest analogue to the above in Mansfield and Tarcov:

"So those who prudently order laws having this defect, avoiding each of these modes by itself, chose one that shared in all, judging it firmer and more stable; for the one guards the other, since in one and the same city there are the principality, the aristocrats, and the popular government (Machiavelli, Niccolò trans. by Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, 13)."

I then wanted to figure out exactly what was going on by looking at the original Italian and here is what it said:

Talché, avendo quelli che prudentemente ordinano leggi, conosciuto questo difetto, fuggendo ciascuno di questi modi per sé stesso, ne elessero uno che participasse di tutti, giudicandolo più fermo e più stabile; perché l'uno guarda l'altro, sendo in una medesima città il Principato, gli Ottimati, e il Governo Popolare (Machiavelli, Niccolò (Discorsi) Liber Liber 1971, 31).

This is my best translation:

So that, having those who prudently order the laws, knowing this defect, fleeing each of these modes by itself, they chose (elected) one that participates in all of them, judging it more firm and more stable; because the one watches the other, being in the same city the Principality, the Optimates (Aristocrats) and the Popular Government.

In sum, Lerner and Detmold put the word "check" in their version, which is exciting but not literal enough to pass muster for Manfield and Tarcov. However, for once, Lerner and Detmold are actually onto something. The idea of guarding each other, or watching each other (one could use either translation) in this context is very much the concept of checks and balances that Lerner and Detmold wish to invoke or evoke.

No matter how this passage is translated, I think that Lerner and Detmold's idea of checks and balances is correct and Mansfield and Tarcov's translation does not really militate against this interpretation. The key idea here is that in a mixed regime, the three elements of monarchy (principality), oligarchy (optimates/aristocracy) and popular government (democracy in Aristotelian thought) check each other in a very real sense.

V. Conclusion

It is clear that Machiavelli supports this mixed regime type largely because of how it leads to political freedom through power checking and balancing power. The influence on Madison in Federalist No. 10 seems obvious (Madison, James. "Federalist Number 10", in *The*

Federalist (Gideon Edition), 1818. Edited with an Introduction, Reader's Guide, Constitutional Cross-reference, Index, and Glossary by George W. Carey and James McClellan (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001: 42-48), retrieved 6/12/2015 at http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/788)).

Machiavelli clearly endorses the Republic as the best practicable regime type, i.e. the practical ideal regime type. Yet, he never names it. He instead sues the term Republic for all of the regime types other Principality and Tyranny. Still, it is clear that the Republic regime type is the Ideal Republic in Machiavelli, which is much more resilient to corruption than any other regime type. He clearly views this regime type to be what Rome was at its more powerful and freest, i.e. before the Gracchi mortally wounded the Republic (Machiavelli, Niccolò trans. Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, 16).

Therefore, Machiavelli, since he embraced the Republic as his best practicable regime type, is a republican of some sort. However, Mansfield and Tarcov, the great translators, doubt that he is a classical republican. They acknowledge that he was some kind of republican, but view him as a republican devoted to enlightened self-interest/selfishness. This idea of Machiavelli as a selfish republican is opposed by Pocock, Viroli, and Pettit. I view him as a classical republican rather than a selfish republican (Pocock, J.G.A. 2010. "Machiavelli and Rome: The republic as ideal and as history", in J. Najemy (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli* (Cambridge Companions to Literature, 144-156. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), Viroli, Maurizio. *Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought: Machiavelli*. 1998. Oxford: Oxford University Press, in its entirety, and Pettit, Philip.1997. *Republicanism: a Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, in its entirety).

If gaining freedom from unfreedom is hard, losing freedom is easy, and the best way to begin free is to found a new free state, then maintenance of freedom becomes essential. Chapter Two tells us that only an ideal republic (what Cicero would consider a Republic and Aristotle a polity) can maintain freedom in a state (political freedom) for a long time. Thus, there really is no avoiding republican institutions if one is to remain free. The argument that Machiavelli is anything but a republican seems easy to dismiss after reading just these two chapters of Book One of the Discourses (Cicero, Marcus Tullius, 2009*,* in its entirety).

In truth, Machiavelli's republicanism makes the world a better place to be (Chapin, Harry. 1972. "A Better Place to Be", in *Sniper and Other Love Stories*. Prod. by Fred Kewley, Elektra Records. Found online in the Harry Chapin Archive, retrieved on 12/30/14 at http://harrychapin.com/music/better.shtml.)

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