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**Najemy, John M. (ed.). The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli**

Mauricio Suchowlansky

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Louis Marin's post-structuralist, post-Marxist claim, for example, that *Utopia* represents an 'ideological critique of ideology'? What would they make of the very prevalent idea since the collapse of the Berlin Wall that we are now in an era of 'the End of Utopia'? What would they make of the currently widespread claim that *Utopia* represents not only the first modern document of social democracy, but also the first modern English document of the discourse (and ideology) of colonialism? Not only are there no excerpts from any thinkers who might have put forward such ideas as ideology, the End of Utopia, or the discourse of colonialism; there are no citations for 'Further Reading' of any texts that allude to these ideas.

In the end, this new edition is not so new at all. For above all, this is an edition that allows for the frustrated expectations of the past, but not, in any sense, however problematically, however merely optative, for hope in the future.

ROBERT APPELBAUM, *Uppsala University*

**Najemy, John M. (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xvii, 282. ISBN: 978-0-521-67846-9 (paperback) \$29.99.**

"Like all thinkers, he belonged to his time; but like very few he is timeless and universal" (13). John Najemy's concluding remarks in the introductory section of *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli* accurately capture the essence of this compendium: to trace, contextualize, and understand both the active and intellectual planes of one of the most influential—and yet often bastardized—authors in the history of western of political thought. Indeed, the extent and diversity of the sixteen chapters of this volume faithfully represent Najemy's cautious observation about transforming Machiavelli into a "prophet" or a "harbinger of modernity" (8). In other words, what all the authors in this volume share is their interest in avoiding what Gennaro Sasso has referred to as the "invenzione del filosofo-interprete" (1967, 9). That is, they all highlight the importance of historical and philological grounding of texts so as to avoid an

overly *proleptic*—and historically unfaithful—understanding of Machiavelli's life and texts.

As a point of departure, and concerning the complexity and configuration of this book, we can subdivide the chapters of this volume into five constituent themes. The first four chapters are mostly dedicated to Machiavelli's political career and the Florentine political context as influential factors in his intellectual development. This is explored by James Atkinson's biographical essay based on Machiavelli's epistolary exchanges, and Robert Black's study on how Machiavelli's most fundamental concepts and themes were already present in the texts belonging to the time of his tenure as Second Chancellor of the Republic. Similarly, Roslyn Pesman examines the role of the Gonfalonier of Justice of the Republic between 1502 and 1512, Piero Soderini, in the intellectual development of Machiavelli, while Humfrey Butters' article looks at Machiavelli's relation to the Medici and the *Palleschi*.

The second constituent element of the volume is Machiavelli's *scritti maggiori*. Wayne Rebhorn analyzes Machiavelli's recurrent use of architectural metaphors in *The Prince* and their connection to the epic tradition. Najemy's own chapter focuses on Machiavelli's other major political text, the *Discourses on Livy*, and argues that "the unifying theme of the Discourses is the precariousness of republics and their vulnerability to the ambition of noble and elite classes" (102). Mikael Hornqvist's provocative piece investigates the extent to which the *Art of War* is influenced or anticipated by some of the earlier texts Machiavelli composed in relation to the creation of a civil militia. Lastly, Anna Maria Cabrini looks at one of the most overlooked texts in Machiavelli's corpus, the *Florentine Histories*, and claims that Machiavelli's main objective in the *Histories* was to extend the analysis he had already presented in the *Discourses on Livy*, albeit episodically, with respect to "Florence's negative historical and political conditions beyond contemporary events" (130).

The third section is represented by those chapters dedicated to four of the main themes in Machiavelli's political thought: morality and politics, agency and contingency, religion and the state, and history and the human condition. J. G. A. Pocock analyzes the "history of 'Machiavelli and republicanism'" (144) and claims that the Florentine's interest in the duality republic-principality was specific to his historical and linguistic context—out of which Machiavelli consequently constructed two different realms of study of republicanism: the 'ideal' and the 'historical' ones (149). In the most philosophical of all chap-

ters, Alison Brown insists that Machiavelli's early views on religion, fortune and free will have been strongly influenced by Lucretian atomism (160–3). For Virginia Cox, “A rhetorical reading of *The Prince*” warns us “against taking the treatise as representing Machiavelli's considered position on the question of political ethics” *prima facie* without considering the rhetorical structure of the text (186). Finally, Barbara Spackman claims that throughout Machiavelli's corpus we can observe Machiavelli's conception of power and autonomy and power and subordination in terms of gender roles and antinomies.

Another collection of chapters—including those by Rebhorn, Albert Russell Ascoli and Angela Matilde Capodivacca, and Ronald L. Martinez—focuses on the importance of different literary forms, mostly poetry and theatre, in the works of Machiavelli. Ascoli and Capodivacca survey “four poetic dimensions” in Machiavelli's texts: the poetic aspect of non-poetic texts, his poetry, his sources, and the relationship between poetry and political writing. Martinez looks at the importance of theater in Machiavelli, both as a creative and intellectual steppingstone in his early days and as a prominent *genre* in his political thought. In so doing, Martinez presents Machiavelli as a complex writer, whose political texts must be read and understood alongside his literary ones.

The last two chapters of this companion are dedicated to the impact and reception of Machiavelli's text beyond his context and time. Victoria Kahn's excellent chapter focuses on the ‘reception history’ of the works of Machiavelli in the eighteenth century, and claims—contrary to the belief of certain intellectual historians—that Machiavelli's readers did not get him wrong; rather, it is Machiavelli himself that provided the potential for a dual reception of his texts. Jérémié Barthas surveys the modern and contemporary impact of the political thought of the Florentine author and argues that, in great part, his reception has been shaped by what Barthas refers to as the “dialectic” of Machiavelli's thought (256).

While these outstanding sixteen chapters provide an in-depth introduction to the works, life and times of Niccolò Machiavelli, some issues have not been given their due importance. For instance, the influence of Classic—both Greek and Roman—and Renaissance scholars—other than Guicciardini—in the works of Machiavelli is only discussed in passing, and so is the role of the ‘aesthetic’ as an inlet to both his political and moral evaluations. Notwithstanding, the quality and originality of these texts by leading Machiavelli experts

from a vast array of perspectives and disciplines makes of *The Cambridge Companion to Machiavelli* an invaluable addition to the field.

MAURICIO SUCHOWLANSKY, *University of Toronto*

**Nelson, Jonathan K. and Richard J. Zeckhauser. *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008. Pp. xviii, 234. ISBN: 978-0-691-12541-1 (hardcover) \$45.**

As partially quoted in *The Patron's Payoff* (185), Scott Fitzgerald once famously wrote (in the short story "Rich Boy"): "Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early . . .". In his pioneering studies of Renaissance economics in Italy Richard Goldthwaite demonstrated why and how the rich were different. In the introductory chapters to the *Patron's Payoff* art historian Jonathan Nelson and economist Richard Zeckhauser join forces to apply Michael Spence's theories of information economics to assert that, by signalling, signposting, and stretching, the very rich could translate this aura of privilege into forms of social currency that were appreciated by broad publics attuned to reading displays of magnificence in terms of their social relevance and political value to church and city. In this analysis, commissioning was a game that involved a variety of stake-holders and Zeckhauser and Nelson apply game theory to identify the players and payoffs, the social benefits and costs, between patrons and publics. Their approach helps to nuance the social relationships underlying cultural production and successfully disrupts the binary approach between patrons and artists which has informed some earlier patronage studies. One hopes that information economists will gain as much as art historians can from this book.

The chapters that follow are written by expert art historians who apply these theories of signalling, signposting, and stretching to specific commissions. For example, Nelson and Zeckhauser themselves discuss the building and decoration of private family chapels in Florentine churches by wealthy Florentine patricians as a virtual "paradise for signalers." Chapels and paintings were used by patrons to convey general messages about their wealth and status