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Sidney’s Debt to Machiavelli: A New Look

by

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“I wish not there should be / Graved in mine epitaph a poet’s name,” asserts Astrophil late in Sidney’s sonnet sequence (AS 90.8-9), and on this point at least we may safely assume that Astrophil speaks for Sidney as well. Indeed, recent scholarship emphasizes that Sidney was drawn more to the arena of politics than to the world of letters, a world that he himself called only his “unelected vocation” (Works 3: 3). James M. Osborn, for example, in his Young Philip Sidney 1572-1577, stresses Sidney’s patient preparation for and lifelong commitment to the theory and practice of statecraft. Richard McCoy finds that Sidney’s poetics were shaped, in part, by certain crises of state within Elizabeth’s court during the 1570s, while Andrew D. Weiner reads all of Sidney’s works in the light of an identifiable “Protestant poetic,” as hammered out in the smithy of the Leicester-Walsingham political faction. Other recent studies reveal that Sidney undertook the composition of the Arcadia only because his urgent objections to Elizabeth’s proposed match with the Duke of Alençon had brought about a hiatus in his own political activity at court.

If it is true, then, that Sidney was a poet who was centrally concerned with politics, it is surprising that so little has been written about his relation to Niccolò Machiavelli, the most influential political theorist of the Renaissance. A study of this relation might shed some useful light on the political implications of Sidney’s own works and on those of the Pembroke circle; it might add also to our understanding of Machiavelli’s impact on Protestant thinkers generally during the latter decades of Elizabeth’s long reign.

II

What little work has been done on the extent of Sidney’s debt to Machiavelli suggests that the poet was quite sympathetic to the ideas of the Florentine Secretary. However, the evidence upon which this view has been based is often
scanty and deceptive. For example, Edwin A. Greenlaw, in an early study, sur­mises that Sidney considered Machiavelli his “friend” (187); he alludes to (but does not quote from) an exchange of letters in 1574 between the poet and his mentor, the Huguenot propagandist Hubert Languet. But the texts of the let­ters, composed originally in Latin, argue against Greenlaw’s conclusion. Here is Sidney in the relevant passage:

I never could be induced to believe that Machia­velli was right about avoiding an excess of clem­ency, until I learnt from my own experience, what he has endeavoured with many arguments to prove. For I, with my usual vice of mercy, endured at your hands not only injustice, but blows and wounds. . . . [B]ut I shall substitute wholesome severity for this empty show (for so in truth it is) of clemency. What! have you really persuaded yourself, that you may not only in safety laugh at the Welsh, paint the Saxon character in its own colors, set down the Florentines and Savoyards for thieves and robbers, but you must go a step further and threaten the English (Pears 53–4)?

Languet replies:

I admire the candour with which you warn me to beware of you, for that is the meaning of your fierce threats. But there you do not follow the advice of your friend Machiavelli, unless perhaps it is fear that has extorted those big and sounding words, and you thought that so I might be deterred from my intentions (Meyer 19).

Clearly, Greenlaw’s sober reading of these bantering and sardonic letters is excessively literal. Sidney pretends distress at some comments by Languet and laments that Machiavelli’s fabled cynicism has been born out in his friend’s “betrayal”; Languet playfully responds that Sidney should heed the Secretary’s caveat against threatening one’s enemy. Nothing serious is intended here, and all we fairly can conclude from the amicable exchange is that Sidney, in common with most Oxonians of his day, had read his Machiavelli.

Later, Irving Ribner takes up the same theme in a series of four articles, all of which maintain that Sidney was a Machiavellian, at least in several impor­tant respects. Ribner contends that the revised *Arcadia* and Sidney’s famous letter to Elizabeth in opposition to the Alençon match exhibit principles and
methods which parallel those of the Florentine, owing to the fact that Sidney and Machiavelli share "commonplaces" of Renaissance thought—ideas which proceed from an intellectual milieu shared by both men ("Discourse" 152-72; "Machiavelli and Sidney" 152-5). To support this argument, Ribner cites excerpts from the works of both writers which, he claims, reveal "similarities [that] are striking." Here, for example, are Machiavelli and Sidney on the subject of political corruption, in passages selected by Ribner ("Machiavelli and Sidney" 168):

**Sidney**

For they having the power of kings, but not the nature of kings, used the authority as men do their farms, of which they see within a yeere they shall goe out: making the kinges sword trike whom they hated, the kings purse reward wom they love: and (which is worst of all) making the Royall countenance serve to undermine the Royall sovereignty . . . . Men of vertue suppressed, lest their shining discover the others filthiness. *(Old Arcadia)*

**Machiavelli**

When full power is conferred for any length of time . . . it is always dangerous, and will be productive of good or ill results, according as those upon whom it is conferred are themselves good or bad. . . . Absolute authority will quickly corrupt the people, and will create friends and partisans to itself. . . . Superior men in corrupt republics . . . are generally hated, either from jealousy or the ambition of others. *(Discourses 1: 35, 2: 22)*

Ribner admits that "The parallels are . . . not exact, but they are sufficiently similar to illustrate that what Sidney conceived of as the marks of corruption in government were not essentially different from Machiavelli's ideas on the same subject" ("Machiavelli and Sidney" 169).

But do the facts warrant even so modest a proposal? Sidney, in the passage cited by Ribner, maintains that those who are not born to rule may use delegated power in a narrow, spiteful manner toward their personal enemies, with the result that royal authority itself is undermined; Machiavelli, on the other hand, argues that absolute power generates various effects, depending upon the nature of the possessor of that power, and that such authority represents a danger to common people, not to kings. Further, it is easy to put together excerpts from the writings of undisputed anti-Machiavellians which bear at least as much similarity to Machiavelli's thought in this respect as do Sidney's. As one example, here is Huguenot Philippe du Plessis-Mornay in his *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579) on the identical topic:

A tyrant nourishes and feeds factions and dissensions amongst his subjects, ruins one by the help
of another, that he may the easier vanquish the remainder. . . . Where particular designs and private ends prevail against the public profit, there questionless is a tyrant and a tyranny. . . . The tyrant hates and suspects discreet and wise men, and fears no opposition more than virtue, being conscious of his own vicious courses (Laski 186, 189, 185).

A comparison between this passage and those offered by Ribner shows that Sidney’s comments are appreciably closer to Mornay’s, both in tone and content, than they are to Machiavelli’s. Further, to the degree that Mornay in this citation does resemble the Secretary, Ribner’s notion of a common Renaissance pool of ideas becomes a largely meaningless and even misleading conception: Mornay loathed Machiavelli and believed that Huguenot political philosophy proceeded from root assumptions that were diametrically opposed to those contained in The Prince; indeed, Mornay’s works have been justly termed “a confutation of the tyrant-breeding doctrines of the atheistical Florentine” (Briggs, “Political” 142). If even Mornay is “not essentially different from Machiavelli,” then there is no such thing as a contest between ideas.

Ribner seeks to evade this difficulty by resurrecting the venerable idea that Renaissance political theory was informed by not one but two distinct “Machiavellisms”; the first consisted of the insights that Machiavelli himself recorded in The Prince and the Discourses, while the second reflected an ignorant, prejudicial, and inflammatory misreading of those works. “[A] careful distinction must be drawn,” Ribner maintains, “between the popular conception of ‘Machiavellianism’ and the political philosophy contained in the Florentine’s actual writings” (“Sidney’s Arcadia” 225). This distinction allows Ribner to be untroubled by the plain fact that Sidney stocks the 1590 Arcadia with its fair share of Elizabethan “Machiavels,” including the tyrant kings of Phrygia and Pontus, the surreptitious poisoner Plexirus, and the seditious Amphialus. Ribner is confident that these characters are merely the result of Sidney’s “misunderstanding of certain ideas in the Florentine’s writings,” a misunderstanding which Sidney shares, asserts Ribner, with other Elizabethan writers, including Thomas Kyd (“Sidney’s Arcadia” 229, 225). But elsewhere Ribner is at pains to document Sidney’s familiarity with Machiavelli’s works (“Sidney’s Discourse” 178n, 187), and from other sources we know that Kyd owned an early manuscript translation of The Prince, quite likely the product of his own hand (Morris 416). Clearly, then, Ribner’s “two Machiavellisms” theory is not applicable in this context, and his argument that “there is little disagreement between Machiavelli and Sidney in matters of statecraft” (“Machiavelli and Sidney” 172) remains strained and unpersuasive.
But if the traditional idea of Sidney-as-Machiavellian cannot stand, what is to take its place? Recent historical and biographical studies, some of which I allude to above, portray a Sidney who was associated all his political life with Protestant religious factions at home and abroad that were characteristically (and often ferociously) opposed to Machiavelli and his doctrines. The natural inference, therefore, is that Sidney himself must have been an anti-Machiavellian. There are problems with this conclusion as well, but at least the idea rests on a firmer evidential foundation than does the opposing view.

For instance, there no longer can be much doubt that the revised *Arcadia* reflects Sidney’s unvarying allegiance to Huguenot political thought. This fact is hardly surprising: Sidney was a radical Protestant internationalist, one who had tied his ambitions at court and his conception of God to that particular sort of Calvinism he shared with the likes of Languet and Mornay on the continent and with Fulke Greville at home. Further, to be such a Protestant was to be, *ipso facto*, an opponent of Machiavelli.

There are sound historical reasons behind this linkage. In 1572, for example, Sidney traveled to France in the train of the Earl of Lincoln, who had been commissioned to discuss with Charles IX the proposed match between Alençon and Elizabeth; Sidney was actually in Paris with Mornay during the terrible Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day, witnessing there the politic slaughter of thousands of his fellow believers (Sells 130-1; Pears xiv). The massacre itself was instantly labeled “Machiavelli’s Holiday” by the people (Symonds 25), owing to the perceived influence of the Secretary’s writings on Catherine de’ Medici, the queen mother. “The Huguenot thesis,” notes Donald R. Kelley (554), “... was that the real guilt for France’s plight in general and the massacre in particular lay neither with the tiger [Charles] nor with the whore [Catherine] but with Machiavelli himself.”

Prior to the killings, Huguenot writers occasionally had seen Machiavelli as a sort of ally, mainly because of his anti-papal pronouncements. But the Florentine’s supposed connection with the murders changed all that and established a permanent Protestant enmity toward Machiavelli. G. Cardascia observes that:

Le calendrier machiavélique ne devient dense qu’après 1572. Cette année est une date capitale dans l’histoire de la pensée de Machiavel. Elle marque le début d’une ère où l’auteur du *Prince*, connu la veille par un petit nombre d’érudits et d’italianistes, acquiert brusquement une popularité de mauvais aloi (130).

The atrocity occasioned such Huguenot tracts as Innocent Gentillet’s *Contre-Machiavel* (1576), in which Machiavelli is characterized as “an exponent of a
villainous atheistical tyranny designed solely for the malicious pleasure and selfish advancement of the prince" (Phillips 32); François Hotman’s *Franco-gallia* (1573), which views Machiavelli’s influence as a threat to historical French constitutionalism (Laski 35–7); Mornay’s *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579), which sees Machiavelli as having forever removed considerations of morality from the arena of politics; and Lambert Daneau’s epistle dedicatory (1577) to a Latinizing of the *Contre-Machiavel*, in which English Protestants are urged to equate Machiavelli with Satan himself. Even Jean Bodin, who had been complimentary to Machiavelli in his *Methodus* (1566), attacks the Florentine’s works as “slow poison” in his post-Massacre *République* (1576) (Salmon 360–1). Antonio D’Andrea sums up Protestant reaction to Machiavelli in the wake of the Bartholomew carnage:

Anti-Machiavellism thus finds a justification in strictly orthodox Calvinist terms. Machiavellism is the very evil Calvin had foreseen as inevitably awaiting those who travelled the road of ill-advised moderation, incredulity, lust, and merry living. The fight against Machiavelli is the fight against Satan: and this is no metaphor nor a figment of popular imagination, but the result of a well thought out doctrinal perspective. . . (“Machiavelli” 167, 161).

The various stock Machiavels who parade through the *New Arcadia*, accordingly, are not there by accident or because Sidney misreads Machiavelli’s texts. They are there because of a general Protestant revulsion toward Machiavelli following the events of 1572, a revulsion which Sidney—given his politics, friends, and religion—may well have shared, at least in part.

**IV**

As I mentioned above, however, there are problems with this view of Sidney as a staunch anti-Machiavellian. Among these difficulties is the fact that such a portrayal is necessarily fashioned out of evidence which exists at one remove from the poet himself. On those few occasions when Sidney does write directly about Machiavelli, his exact attitude toward the Secretary is difficult to pin down; but it is surely not a posture of unthinking hatred. In an affectionate letter (1580) to the young Edward Denny, for example, Sidney recommends Machiavelli’s writings (meaning, no doubt, the *Art of War*) as a guide to military tactics (Osborn 539). Further, when his uncle Leicester was libeled in a long tract published in 1584, Sidney disputed the charges in words which seem to betray a bitter sympathy for the low estate of Machiavelli’s own reputation and an active concern for the ways in which his texts were commonly
being used: "[W]hen [a slanderer] plays the statist," writes Sidney, "wringing very unluckily some of Machiavel's axioms to serve his purpose, then indeed—then he triumphs" (Campbell 326, 331). So Sidney's own comments about Machiavelli, in contrast to the litany of hysterical abuse sung by his fellow Calvinists, are temperate to the point of neutrality.

It is true, nonetheless, that Sidney took part in the fashionable Protestant xenophobia of Italian culture. In a letter to Languet (1574), he refers to Italy as "that rotten member" of the Christian community, a "baneful" place that would "contaminate the very Turks" (Pears 48). A month later, Languet writes back to support his friend's critique:

> Whatever nations have in my memory followed [the Italians'] counsels in the administration of their government, they have involved their country in the most dire calamities. Of their wickedness I say nothing. Are not those persons most commended in Italy, who know how to dissemble, how to flatter, ... and [how] to accommodate themselves to the passions of such men ... (Zouck 79)?

It is indeed likely, therefore, that Sidney and his closest associates would have agreed with Roger Ascham that "Inglese italianato e un diavolo incarnato" (Richmond 224).

Yet no reader of The Defence of Poesie can fail to note Sidney's kinship with and emulation of a host of contemporary and near-contemporary Italian critics, including Bembo, Scaliger, Castelvetro, Mazzeo, and many others. And it is to belabor the obvious to cite the Italian pastoral conventions of the Arcadia and the Petrarchanism of Sidney's sonnet sequence as evidence that his distaste for Italy was quite selective. For Sidney, as for his compatriots, Italy harbored as many delights as dangers.

We are left, therefore, with a Sidney whose relation to Machiavelli is clouded, ambiguous. Unlike many of his Calvinist brothers, Sidney seems reluctant to follow the easy road of Machiavelli-baiting. Given the times, his reluctance is perhaps surprising; given the clarifying view of history, however, Sidney's stance is natural and comprehensible. For there are many ways in which Machiavellism and Sidney's Calvinism—however contentious they may have been in the sixteenth century—are actually parallel historical movements.

For example, both Machiavelli and the Calvinists were in fundamental agreement about the theoretical origins of government and about the practical implications of those origins. In the Discourses (1: 2), Machiavelli surmises that earliest man lived "dispersed . . . like wild beasts," until,

> . . . when their numbers multiplied, they gathered together and . . . began to search among them-
selves for one who was stronger and braver, and they made him their leader and obeyed him. . . . But when they began to choose the prince by hereditary succession rather than by election, the heirs immediately began to degenerate from the level of their ancestors and, putting aside acts of valor, they thought that princes had nothing to do but to surpass other princes in luxury, lasciviousness, and in every other form of pleasure. So, as the prince came to be hated he became afraid of this hatred and quickly passed from fear to violent deeds, and the immediate result was tyranny (177-8).

Sidney, singing a song "old Languet had me taught," similarly describes the genesis of government in the "Ister Banke" ecologue, a poem included at the end of the first book of the *Old Arcadia*. In that poem, a beast fable, the animals of an idyllic, prelapsarian world pray to a reluctant Jove and receive man as their king, but man quickly (and inevitably, according to both Machiavellian and Huguenot theory) devolves into a despot who begins to "swelle in tyrannie" and to kill the beasts for "sport" and "glutton taste." In the view of both Sidney and Machiavelli, therefore, the origin of the state comes about within an amoral context and with the consent of the governed; further, in both cases the princes' subjects, who contractually participated in forming the state, have been unjustly denied any similar participation in the conduct of government. As Ernest William Talbert points out, Sidney consistently believed in the "mixed state" idea, in that "the exercise of authority should correspond with its public origin" (110). This belief, of course, was shared by the Huguenots and by the other radical Protestant thinkers surrounding Sidney, who stubbornly clung to the idea even in the face of Elizabeth's occasional proclamations of absolute power. The contract theory of governmental origin and the concept of the mixed state obviously carry with them ramifications which touch upon the whole complicated matter of sovereignty and the right to popular resistance. For our present purposes, however, it is enough to note that these ideas run along similar channels in both the *Arcadia* and the *Discourses*.

Moreover, Machiavelli and Sidney are in accord about mankind's essential nature: Calvin's dictum that "all the desires of men are evil" is echoed in the works of both writers. Machiavelli is very clear on this point:

'[I]t is necessary for anyone who organizes a republic and institutes laws to take for granted that all men are evil and that they will always express the wickedness of their spirit whenever they have the
opportunity; and when such wickedness remains hidden . . . time, which is said to be the father of every truth, will uncover it. (*Discourses* 1: 3; 181–2)

In *The Prince*, as well, Machiavelli pictures man as a creature who is driven by the flames of infinite and insatiable desire, pursuing his narrow and always selfish ends with monomaniacal intensity. And, as Joseph Mazzeo points out, Machiavelli's understanding that “men are born bad and generally do not do good unless they are forced to do so” links him with a well-established tenet of Christian thought (147). Machiavelli’s conception of man and the universe, of course, has little to do directly with Christianity, but Mazzeo correctly concludes that there is scarcely any psychological difference between the Secretary's idea of *ambizione*, for instance, and the Christian concept of *concupiscientia*; both speak to man's “limitless will, whether that will is held to be corrupted through a fall,” as Calvin believed, or is “defined as naturally and, as it were, properly limitless,” as Machiavelli would have it (96, 96n).

Because man is hopelessly corrupt and endlessly selfish, any political order which seeks to control him must take that corruption into account. For Machiavelli, as for Sidney, the mixed state offers the best chance a ruler has to orchestrate the competing and selfish wills of men, playing one off against the other, and thereby checking a naturally entropic drift toward political chaos. Both Machiavelli and Sidney are suspicious of democracy, a system which, in their view, merely sets loose the raging dogs that are men's wills. And, on similar grounds, both writers normally oppose tyranny—Sidney throughout the *New Arcadia* and Machiavelli in *The Prince* (9) and the *Discourses* (1: 10): despotism is inherently unstable, because it seeks utterly to quash the irrepressible viciousness of man (Mazzeo 148, 148n).

Finally, this concern of Sidney’s for political order is another trait he shares with Machiavelli, or, more accurately, that Machiavelli shares with the Elizabethan world. Nor is the inherent depravity of mankind the only threat to such stability: for both the Calvinist and the Florentine, the world and all its institutions are, by nature, subject to wrenching periods of cyclical decline. “Worth must decay,” Greville laments in the *Monarchy* treatise, “and height of power decline”; and, in his much-quoted commentary on the *Arcadia*, Greville makes it clear that Sidney shared this view:

In all these creatures of his making, [Sidney's] intent and scope was to turn barren philosophy precepts into pregnant images of life, and in them, first on the monarch’s part, lively to represent the growth, state, and declination of princes, change of government and laws, vicissitudes of sedition, faction, succession, confederacies, plantations with
all other errors or alterations in public affairs
(Life 15).

Indeed, the *Arcadia* describes a world in which even “the strongest buildings and lastest monarchies are subject to end” (*Works* 1: 486) and “wherein there is nothing so certain as our continual uncertainitie” (1: 26). For Machiavelli, too, such are the ways of the world. Recurrent floods and plagues expunge old religions and old tongues (*Discourses* 2: 5), while whole races of men are periodically erased from the face of the earth. Moreover, for Machiavelli history “tends to repeat itself in progressively degenerate form[s],” and “the repetition of history will always be retrograde, for all things are equally subject to the law of decay” (Mazzeo 150). Therefore, Calvinism and Machiavellism share in this respect a common world view, one in which the only still point in an otherwise shifting and declining universe is the nature of man, a nature which itself is hopelessly corrupt (Mazzeo 133, 149-50).

Nor are these the only parallels between Machiavelli and Sidney. For example, both figures urge a restrictive role within the state for positive law and for the established (“outward”) church. Further, both thinkers believe, as Howell points out (215), that the state should serve to benefit the larger community. And there are even times when Sidney's Christian understanding of “virtue” is closely allied to Machiavellian *virtù*: both ideas can refer to what Talbert calls “an amoral forceful accomplishment” (94) which is quite divorced from ethical considerations.

V

Nonetheless, this sort of parallelism can be carried much too far; there remain whole worlds of thought and belief in which Machiavelli and Sidney are clearly poles apart. For example, Sidney’s world view is based upon an embracing of natural law, a concept which Machiavelli repudiates or, more correctly, ignores. “I know there is a hyer power that must uphold me,” writes Sidney to Walsingham, “[and] I trust I shall not by other mens wantes be drawn from my self” (*Works* 3: 166-7). Machiavelli has no such confidence. Hiram Haydn emphasizes that “Machiavelli divorces history—as he divorces man, the state, justice and law—from revelation and divine purpose and unity,” pointing to “the breakup of the Thomist synthesis of divine and natural law...” (153-4). Machiavelli’s universe, notes Mazzeo, is “open-ended,” “beyond ideology,” and is filled with an appreciation for “ethical irrationality” (162), but Sidney’s world, however fallen, is always open to the possibility of divine mystery and the certitude of reason and absolute values (Talbert 116). Indeed, Machiavelli favors paganism over Christianity, seeing the passivity of the latter as inimical to a bold participation in the affairs of state (Mazzeo 110-11). There is a sharp discrepancy as well between Christian providence on the
one hand and Machiavellian *fortuna* on the other, a gap not likely to be blinked by a believer in the purposeful confines of Calvinist predestination.

Finally, and perhaps most important, the political program advocated by Sidney and his Protestant faction was conspicuous by its ideological rigidity. While Elizabeth and Cecil sought painstakingly to maintain the mercurial balance of power existing on the continent between Spain and France, Sidney and his group urged an outright assault against the Spanish forces gathered in the Low Countries. The same Sidney who rashly criticized Elizabeth's proposed French match, who fought with the Earl of Oxford over a tennis court, who challenged his uncle's slanderer to a duel, and who cast aside his armor in a fit of neo-chivalric bravado on the plains of Zutphen—this was the Sidney whose aims threatened to precipitate a hopeless English campaign against Europe's two mightiest armies. In all these cases, Sidney was confident that God was on his side and that He would be quick to uphold an England which pursued a radical Protestant foreign policy. In Walsingham's words, England's welfare "dependeth on God's goodness who is so long to extend his protection as we shall depend of his providence and shall not seek our safety (carried away by human policy) contrary to his word" (Weiner 24; Howell 66, 98). For Sidney, in short, "politics is ultimately an appendage of religion" (Weiner 4).

This sort of blind, ideological rigidity—this notion that "politics is God's art, not man's" (Weiner 24)—is, of course, distinctly non-Machiavellian. To Machiavelli, the exercise of *virtù* requires constant flexibility, knowledge of how circumstances alter cases, and, above all, the knack of always avoiding rigidity . . . . [H]is is essentially a literary intelligence, aware that life escapes all the abstract schemes we may construct to control it. He would have said that a systematic approach to experience would have disastrous practical consequences, for no single principle is always, in every instance, good. It is the prime necessity for flexibility in statecraft . . . that leads Machiavelli . . . [to embrace] concepts like *fortuna* and *virtù* . . . (Mazzeo 156-7).

Clearly, then, there are ample reasons for Sidney's ambiguous stance toward Machiavelli. As we have seen, Machiavelli's and Sidney's views are in harmony at some points and are wildly discordant at others. It is at least to Sidney's credit that he did not dismiss out-of-hand the Florentine Secretary, who had become by Sidney's day what one observer calls "the bogeyman of the Western world" (Kelley 559). Sidney's struggles with the promises and pitfalls
of Machiavelli's legacy make the poet seem even more our contemporary; for we, like Sidney, must come to terms in our own day with the forbidding realities of power politics.

NOTES

1. This and all subsequent references to Sidney's works are from Feuillerat's four-volume edition.

In the same sentence, Sidney explains that he only "slipped into the title of a Poet . . . ." Nor should this self-deprecation be dismissed as a convention: for a convincing account of Sidney's devotion to a life of action, see Levy 5-18. To his admirer Gabriel Harvey, Sidney's "sovereign profession" neither courtier nor poet but soldier (Howell 166).

2. The idea of two "Machiavellisms," which dates back at least to Meyer's groundbreaking work and which has early roots in Etienne Pasquier's comment in the 1560s that "there be a great many Machiavels among us at this day, who never read his books" (Kelley 555, 555n), remains alive and well in the scholarship; for recent outcroppings, see Mazzeo (157-9) and Lever (9). Other critics, however, are more willing to suggest that Machiavelli's evil reputation in the Renaissance was deserved. "That for us [Machiavelli] is no longer of the Devil's party," notes Spivack (375), "means chiefly that we have got rid of the Devil . . . ." Also see Meinecke, passim. For a more recent assertion of Sidney's Machiavellism, see Levy (12-13), where Levy argues that it was possible by Sidney's day to see Machiavelli as a liberating influence.

3. This topic has been much discussed and most often leads to the question of how willing Sidney is in the Arcadia to countenance a popular rebellion against a legitimate ruler, a subject I do not want to pursue here. The conflicting articles by Briggs and Ribner, cited below, constitute an opening shot in this debate. For more recent views, see McCoy (38-41, 184-99, et passim), Walzer (67, 88-9), and, for a conservative stance, Talbert (89-117); also see my "Fulke Greville and the Myth of Machiavellism," Diss. South Florida 1983, 112-34. The most convincing short summary I have seen of Sidney's political position is in Bergbusch (27).

4. This is an overstatement, however, for Catherine does not utterly escape culpability at the hands of the Huguenot writers; see the epistle dedicatory to Gentillet's Contre-Machiavel, for example. Likewise, Charles is held accountable for the massacre in the anonymous Reveille-matin des Francois et de leurs voisins (1574); see D'Andrea "Context" 403-4, 404n.

5. For the text of the attack against Leicester, see Burgoyne.

6. I borrow a phrase here from the University of Toronto's Kenneth R. Bartlett, who presented his paper, "Dangers and Delights: English Protestants in Italy in the Sixteenth Century," at the Fifth Annual Conference of the American Association for Italian Studies, meeting in Tampa, Florida, April 11-13, 1985. I read the present essay at that same conference.

According to his memorialist Greville, Sidney expressed the hope—in words which echo the final chapter of The Prince—that Italy, with help, might "chase away" the foreign armies that had long oppressed her (Pears 104-5). For a good account of Sidney's visit to Italy—and his mixed reactions to things Italian—see Howell 145-9; for a general statement of his debt to Italian literary models, see Sells 129-49; and see Hale, passim, for a delightful survey of British reaction to Renaissance Italy.

7. This and all subsequent references to Machiavelli's works are drawn from Bondanella and Musa's edition.
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