

Caterina Mordegli

## Silvestro Tegli and the first Latin translation of Machiavelli's *Il Principe*

*Abstract:* Although Agostino Nifo produced a Latin reworking of *Il Principe* before Machiavelli's treatise saw print, the first proper Latin translation was not completed until 1560. Commissioned by the publisher Pietro Perna, it was carried out by the Reformed Umbrian exile Silvestro Tegli and published in Basle as a work of politico-religious Reformist propaganda. The translation was essentially faithful to the original, except for the omission of some passages whose content was too compromising and a stylistic reworking marked by the use of rhetorical *amplificatio*, as was typical of literary prose in the sixteenth century. With its 14 republications and re-printings in the space of 60 years, it helped spread Machiavelli's text throughout Europe, and its fame was only surpassed by Hermann Conring's Latin translation published in 1660, which however largely recast the original for ideological reasons.

Before looking more closely at the first Latin version of Machiavelli's *Il Principe*, I think it is best to start with some background.

Machiavelli's celebrated political treatise, which since its first appearance has enjoyed a level of diffusion and fame (for good or ill) that even surpasses Dante's *Divine Comedy*, was given a Latin version even before it was printed. But that is precisely what it was: a version, and not a translation in the strict sense of the word.

As we know<sup>1</sup>, in March 1523 in Naples the philosopher Agostino Nifo, famous primarily for his commentaries on Aristotle<sup>2</sup>, published an essay in Latin entitled *De regnandi peritia*, an example of the genre of *specula principis* which was very common during the Renaissance humanist period. These so-called "mirrors for princes" were treatises offering instruction about good governance to those in government and in general to the powerful. *De regnandi peritia* contained not only references to ancient sources on the theories of good government, from Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea* to Cicero's *De officiis*, and to political literature from the end of the fifteenth century, but also the translation of a large number of *excerpta* from

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<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive bibliography on the subject has been compiled by Paola Cosentino, 'Un plagio del *Principe*: il *De regnandi peritia* di Agostino Nifo', *Semestrare di Studi (e Testi) italiani*, 1 (1998), 139-60, which undertakes an overall re-examination of the literary, historical and cultural value of the work, and to which I refer the reader for a succinct but exhaustive examination of the question.

<sup>2</sup> On the life and work of Nifo (Sessa Aurunca, ca. 1473-1538, 1545 or 1546), cf. again the bibliographical references given in Cosentino, pp. 141-42, notes 12 and 13).

Machiavelli's work. Since, however, *Il Principe* had not yet been published – it was to be published posthumously nine years later by Blado – Nifo must have consulted it between 1519 and 1522 in the original manuscript, probably at the Giunti publisher's, which at the time both he and Machiavelli frequented, and where, in 1525, Machiavelli's *Art of War* was to be published.

In Nifo's reworking Machiavelli's text is subjected to an Aristotelian revision which completely played down its innovative thrust. As summed up by Giuliano Procacci in his fundamental 1965 study on the success of Machiavelli, more than an «apologia and manifesto in favour of the “principe nuovo”»... the essay in fact becomes «a treatise on the various forms of government, with particular reference to tyranny»<sup>3</sup>.

The fact that he drew liberally from a text that had yet to be officially published (at the same time as making several cuts and adjustments) led critics to talk of plagiarism.

My aim here, however, is not to discuss the literary operation carried out by Nifo, or to investigate whether this accusation is true or not. In Nifo's defence it should be pointed out that the modern concept of literary property was unknown in the classical and medieval age and, even less so, in the renaissance; it is a principle which clashes sharply with the then very widespread practice of imitating literary *auctoritates*<sup>4</sup>.

It is important rather to emphasise that the need to spread Machiavelli's celebrated work in Latin – the language which, for at least a century more, would be the prime language chosen for scientific-political treatises and certain literary genres – was felt by the intellectual circles of the time immediately after its composition, even when their aim was to confute it.

Nevertheless, some forty years had to pass before it was possible to read a full Latin translation of *Il Principe*, and this came about largely thanks to the particular historical-cultural *milieu* that had its focal point in sixteenth-century Reformation Basle.

In this period the Swiss city became a cultural centre of primary importance – especially at the time, between 1514 and 1529, when Erasmus of Rotterdam was staying there, and subsequently in the period between the 1550s and the 1580s – as well as a centre of religious freedom. Indeed, even more so than

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<sup>3</sup> Giuliano Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna di Machiavelli* [Roma: Istituto Storico Italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1965], (p. 11).

<sup>4</sup> In this sense we agree with the correct observations made by Paul Larivaille and Pernet-Beau Simone, *Une réécriture du Prince de Machiavel, le De regnandi Peritia de Agostino Nifo*, Edition Bilingue (Paris: Université de Paris-Nanterre X, Centre de Recherches de Langue et Littérature Italiennes, 1987), p. V, in the Preface to the edition of Nifo's text.

Geneva, Calvin's place of residence, it attracted large numbers of Reformed exiles not only from Italy, but generally from all over Europe<sup>5</sup>.

The town's book and publishing industry definitely played a major role in this development. With its rich heritage of manuscripts that were essentially the property of the ecclesiastical community (in particular, the Dominicans and Carthusians), from 1460 onwards it developed and became (even more so than the University) the main reason for the growth and consolidation of the local humanistic movement during the sixteenth century.

Initially, most published texts tended to be connected to the sources of Christianity – in other words, the Holy Scriptures, the work of the Fathers of the Church and, in particular, the writings of Luther. In the age of the Reformation Basle became the hub from which Luther's writings were distributed across western Europe. Progressively, however (starting roughly from 1530), literary and historiographical works of the Italian Renaissance were added.

In this way publishing houses became meeting points for numerous 'free thinkers' from various parts of Europe – Italy, France, Germany, Poland, to mention only a few. Some were exiles and political refugees, and printers often encountered the hostility of local authorities, who saw them as champions of "subversive" new religious and cultural ideals<sup>6</sup>.

Such was the fate, for example, of Pietro Perna, one of the outstanding figures in the Basle book trade in the post-Reformation period. After moving from Lucca as a refugee in 1542, between 1560 and 1570 he became a point of reference for Italian emigrants, as well as one of the most politically engaged Basle printers and, for this reason as well as on account of his uncomfortable friends, one of the most suspicious in the eyes of the city authorities.

He published over 200 volumes, all important works which helped shape the direction of culture and the religious struggle in Europe. Two strands stood out, which were closely interconnected in terms of their avant-garde potential: religious and medico-scientific, in particular alchemical and naturalistic subjects (it was no accident that one of Perna's consultants was the celebrated naturalist Theodor Zwinger). One need only cite the *Dialogi quatuor* by Sebastian Castellio (a scholar from Savoy who had formerly worked with Calvin in Geneva and later became a professor of Greek at the

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, ed. by Adriano Proserpi, Biblioteca di cultura storica, 193 (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1992), pp. 100-1.

<sup>6</sup> Hans R. Guggisberg, *Basel in the Sixteenth Century. Aspects of the City Republic before, during, and after the Reformation* (St. Louis, Missouri: Center for Reformation Research, 1982), in particular pp. 3-53 *passim*. On Basle as a centre for the diffusion of texts of Italian Humanism and the Renaissance, cf. also Peter Bietenholz, *Der italienische Humanismus und die Blütezeit des Buchdrucks in Basel. Die Basler Drucke italienischer Autoren von 1530 bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft, 1 (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1959), especially pp. 78-79 with regard to Machiavelli's work.

University of Basle), Paolo Giovio's *Opera Omnia*, and the works of Raimondo Lullo and Paracelso. The famous printer also had a particular interest in historians of the late ancient and medieval period (Zosimo, Isidoro di Siviglia, Paolo Diacono, Gregorio di Tours and Ottone di Frisinga), as well as in the great thinkers and essay writers of the Renaissance, including of course Niccolò Machiavelli<sup>7</sup>.

For Italian refugees in Basle at that time the writings of the celebrated Florentine writer (and in particular *Il Principe*, with its strong libertarian and anticlerical thrust) embodied precisely the yearning for political and religious liberty they aspired to and which they thought they could achieve in the Reformed Swiss city. This was especially true of the group of Luccan exiles Perna belonged to, men who had been involved in the revolutionary movement in their home city led by Francesco Burlamacchi; Lucca was the only place in Italy where reform of the Church had also been translated into political reform on the model of the type of republic envisaged by Savonarola for Florence<sup>8</sup>.

Only after this background has been explained can one fully understand Pietro Perna's decision in 1560 to publish a translation of *Il Principe* into Latin, a language that would make the work accessible to the whole cosmopolitan world of intellectuals and political exiles that inhabited Basle at the time.

This publishing initiative assumes even greater significance if we take into account that in 1559 Machiavelli's essay had been banned in Rome. Perna could not have been unaware of this fact, especially given his dealings with Celio Secondo Curione, jurist and professor of eloquence at the University of Basle, as well as one of the leaders of local Protestantism at that time, who might very well have met Perna during his stay in Lucca between 1541 and 1542<sup>9</sup>.

Very probably Perna entrusted the task of translating *Il Principe* to Silvestro Tegli towards the end of 1559. Tegli was one of the numerous members of Perna's cultural 'coterie', and he must have known him very

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Werner Kaegi, 'Machiavelli in Basel', *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, 39 (1940), 5-52 (also in id., *Meditazioni storiche*, Ital. trans. by Delio Cantimori [Bari: Laterza, 1960], pp.155-215), (pp. 13-25) and Antonio Rotondò, *Studi e ricerche di storia ereticale italiana del Cinquecento*, I (Torino: Edizioni Giappichelli, 1974). Pp. 273-394 of this volume, where the reader can also find further bibliographical information, focus particularly on 'Pietro Perna and cultural and religious life in Basle between 1570 and 1580'.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Frederic C. Church, *The Italian Reformers, 1534-1564* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), I, p. 128, in the Italian translation *I riformatori italiani*, by Delio Cantimori, 2 vols (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1935); and Kaegi, pp. 5-12.

<sup>9</sup> Kaegi, pp. 8-9. On the life-story of Curione, cf. Albano Biondi, 'Celio Secondo Curione', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. XXXI (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1985), pp. 443-49. On Curione in Lucca and Basle, see, respectively, Church, I, pp. 121-34, and Cantimori, pp. 103-16.

well, as is reflected in the fact that he supervised and influenced Tegli's work plans.

We have little – and then only fragmentary – information about the life and activities of this Italian intellectual. He declared his Umbrian origin (to be precise, he came from Foligno) in the frontispiece to his translation, which, as it is still without a critical edition and a translation into a modern language, at the moment can only be read in the book published in the sixteenth century by Perna (and subsequent re-printings<sup>10</sup>):

Nicolai Machiavelli Reip. Florentinae a secretis, ad Laurentium Medicem de Principe libellus: nostro quidem seculo apprime utilis et necessarius, non modo ad principatum adipiscendum, sed et regendum et conservandum. Nunc primum ex Italico in Latinum sermonem versus per Sylvestrum Telium *Fulginatam*.

After leaving his home town, Tegli is next to be found in Oxford in 1549, visiting the Reformed theologian Pietro Martire Vermigli (who held the chair in Theology there from 1547), then in Zurich, where his presence is attested by his contacts with Vermigli, who moved there in 1556<sup>11</sup>, and, again, in Geneva in 1558. Here, on the day of 18 May, the Italian community gathered in the presence of Calvin to sign the confession of faith drawn up by Calvin which was supposed to put an end to the dispute over the concept of the trinity, the reason behind the ideological conflict between the orthodox Reformers and the Italian 'heretics'<sup>12</sup>. Tegli was one of seven Italians who refused to sign the document and who preferred to withdraw to Basle rather than renounce his convictions<sup>13</sup>.

There he immediately came into contact with the Italian Reformist cultural circle, which included many people from Lucca. He himself gives a vivid description of his dealings with them in the prefatory letter to his Latin translation of *Il Principe* addressed to the Polish nobleman Abraham

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<sup>10</sup> The transcription of the passage from Tegli normalises some letters and some combinations of consonants as well simplifying the palaeographic abbreviations of Caroline origin typical of sixteenth-century texts (y = i, ji/ij = ii, & = et, u = v/u, nq = mq, etc.). The punctuation has also been modernised at points where problems of comprehension arose. I have adopted these modifications in all the passages in Latin.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p. 636, n. 39, quoted in Marvin W. Anderson, 'Vista Tigurina: Peter Martyr and European Reform (1556-1562)', *The Harvard Theological Review* 83 (1990), 181-206, p. 197. Anderson mistakenly says that Tegli wrote his translation of Machiavelli's *Il Principe* in Zurich.

<sup>12</sup> It should be pointed out that the Italian exiles, immersed as they were in humanistic culture and therefore inclined to focus on the moral content of the Scriptures and the rationalistic criticism of theological dogmas, both Catholic and Protestant, soon met with condemnation by Calvin and the Calvinists. On Italian heretics' criticism of Calvinism, cf. Cantimori, pp. 152-62.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Giorgio Spini, 'Di Nicola Gallo e di alcune infiltrazioni in Sardegna della riforma protestante', *Rinascimento*, 2 (1951), 145-71, pp. 145-6, and, more in general, Kaegi, pp. 7-8 and Cantimori, p. 217.

Zbąski<sup>14</sup>, which replaced the original preface in which Niccolò Machiavelli dedicated his treatise to Lorenzo de' Medici. The text that follows is presented in its entirety for the first time. Since otherwise documentation regarding Tegli is very scant, this represents an opportunity to get to know more closely not only the man and his friends but also his only known work.

Sylvester Telius generosissimo ac splendidissimo viro Abrahamo Sbaski equiti Polono  
S. P. D.

Vide quantum audaciae mihi suppeditet singularis quaedam ingenii tui morumque facilitas, humanissime Abrahamae, qui, cum semel atque iterum obiter te viderim, tamen non verear hunc qualemcumque laborem nostrum, rudem adhuc, vixque e prima scheda repurgatum, ad te mittere. Sed unde tibi (inquiēs) illius singularis ingenii mei morumque facilitatis cognitio, cum vix me (ut fateris) videris? Id paucis accipe, nam paucis expediam.

Nicolaus Liens iuriconsultus, patritius Lucensis, quem post tuum Geneva discessum, sua qua est humanitate, domesticum convictorem habui, multa narrare de te honorate ac candide solebat: nec dubitabat vir ille, omnibus in rebus (ut nosti) integer et gravis, te in omni sermone, si quando incideret occasio, humanum, liberalem, officiosum ac vere Christianum appellare. Hoc idem et Paulus Arnulfinus, vir bonus, nec non Nicolaus Gallus e Sardinia, modestus ac laudatus iuvenis, cunctique Lucenses, qui te noverant, omnes uno ore affirmabant ac testabantur.

Ego autem ob ea, quae de te praedicabantur a tam laudatis viris, ita ad te amandum permovebar, ut, quoad possem et liceret, cogitatione saltem numquam a te discederem dolebamque numquam antea mihi contigisse, ut prius tua familiaritate et consuetudine frui licuisset, quam Geneva in Italiam discederes.

Itaque multa ab illis summa cum laude de te narrata, multa etiam in tuae familiae dignitatem dicta, memoriae mandabam, fiebamque quotidie eorum recordatione tui studiosior. Hinc igitur [...] prima tui cognitio, hinc ingenii tui morumque facilitatis gravissimum testimonium. Veni deinde Basileam eum post annum, quo vehementer coeperam tui desiderio teneri et, quem tantis laudibus efferunt (et quidem merito) probi omnes ac doctissimi quique, Caelium tuum et item nostrum conveni, qui quidem ea, qua est in bonos omnes animi propensione et charitate, amicissime me excepit et, quae ad consolandum Christiana visa sunt ei officia, ea omnia et gravitate illa sua et eloquentia, in me humanissime praestitit. Gravissimis enim iniuriis fueramus eo tempore affecti ab ingratis simul ac impurissimo sychofanta, quem spurium terra nuper tamquam putrem ac pestilentem cibum evomuit: capitalium rerum iudicium inter facinorosos aluit: postremis his temporibus praestantium virorum sacra quaedam societas passa est eversorem. Consolatio igitur illius doctissimi viri ita iucunda eo tempore mihi fuit, ut non modo omnes (sic!) absterneret huius nocentissimi hominis (cuius nomini nunc, ut ad se redeat, parcimus) iniuriarum molestias, sed effecerit mollem etiam et iucundam illarum perferendarum rationem. Verum illud omnium primum cumulavit me omnibus laetitiis, quod non semel atque iterum, sed quam saepissime, quam maxime de te tuaque Christiana pietate, ingenii amoenitate, morum suavitate et integritate vitae praedicantem audivi. Cuius praestantissimi viri testimonium ita illum diuturni mei desiderii igniculum imo pectore fotum auxit et excitavit, ut non potuerit his temporibus hoc qualicumque laboris testimonio non erumpi. Perspectissimum te itaque mihi vides, humanissime Abrahamae, idque ita, ut mihi tecum fuerit agendum, non ut solet qui novis amicitias cupiat illigari, sed qui sane

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<sup>14</sup> This is the modernised spelling of this name, and is to be preferred to commonly used "Sbaski".

in veteri optimi cuiusque necessitudine fuerit confirmatus: voluique potius desiderari verecundiam meam, quae natura ipsa mihi (ut sciunt qui me norunt) tributa est, quam meam a me diligentiam requiri, quod eam minus contulisset ad coniunctionem amoris erga te mei. Adductus sum itaque officio, fide, veteri inter amicos consuetudine, ut hoc (quicquid illud sit) laboris ad hanc animi mei declarationem suscipiendum putarim. Reliquum est igitur, humanissime Abrahame, ut, quem tui et studiosissimum et amantissimum esse sentis, eundem et tua benevolentia et studio inter tuos retinere ac conservare velis.

Ceterum non sum nescius, cuius criminis nomine suspectum compluribus autorem hunc esse clamitent et quam causam afferant, cur ab eius lectione fortasse iudicent hominum animos esse avertendos: verum illud in primis propositum esse debuerat, ut ubique illius summi principis gloriam praedicarem, in unum illum spectarem, finem studiorum hunc nobis proponeremus. Conditum sunt homines, ut, Dei opera contemplantes et admirantes, artificem summum omnium laudent, honorent, venerentur et pura mente colant. Quo posito fundamento, nihil iam sit, ex quo non aliquid ad nos utilitatis redire possit. Nec multum laborandum, siquid auctorem hunc, aut alios Martiales, Ovidios, Lucanos et id (sic!) generis homines profanos videmus, aut pronuntiasse aut quod minus virum bonum decebat scripsisse, modo veluti pratum omnigenis floribus refertum nacti, selectissimum quemque eorum, apud industriae in morem delibantes purissimi mellis favos, haud veneni, ad honestum usum fingere possimus. Fuit olim, et ad finem usque mundi numquam non erit, quin oēs filosofōwn paídej patriárcai melloúsin e%ínai pántwn aēretikl̄n, nihilominus Iustinum, Clementem et alios complures scimus in eorum scriptis versatos et ita exercitatos, ut huius generis τοῦj aēretikoῦj suo ipsorum gladio et doctrina iugularint, quod non fecissent si ab eorum lectione animum evertissent. Cognitio enim mali non est malum sed appetitio ipsaque actio. Occasio (inquiunt) fuisset adempta et posteris mentem inficiendi opinionum pravitate et piis viris tantum in refellendis eorum erroribus laboris insumendi: quasi animi labes aut a profanis avocatione aut temporis diuturnitate aut ullis nisi Dei Optimi Maximi manibus elui possit. Numquam non errat animus aeger, dicebat Ennius: nec oculus conturbatus ad munus suum exequendum est aptus, etiamsi clarissima sint mundi lumina. Malus enim, numquam non malus, ut etiam quae honestissima sint, turpissima reddat, tantum abest, ut ex avocatione a malo refingatur bonus. Adsit in exemplum e profundis Manibus iterum Simon (iam nosset quid miseriarum apud inferos sentiant proditores): num putabimus eum propterea umquam posse conquiescere, etiamsi filium Dei numquam videat nec agnoscat (uti re vera nec vidit nec cognovit umquam ex animi pietate), quominus aliquem virum bonum per simulationem pietatis nefarie sit proditurus? Fallitur plane qui hoc credit. Mala mens, malus animus, etiamsi furca arceatur, usque tamen recurrit et ad ingenium redit.

Tollendus est itaque mentis error et nihil non bonum, nihil non sanctum deprehendemus. Tolle auri sacram famem, numquam execrandarum rerum aurum dicetur causa. Oculo enim pravo (ut dictum est) vitiatumque mala sunt etiam quae optima. Ex animi namque affectione non ex rei subiectae natura pravum quid aut rectum iudicari debet.

Vale et, qua es animi, sinceritate et in religione constanti fide fruire.

Basiliae, XIII Calend. Aprilis, MDLX

What is evident from Tegli's words is his close relationship with the two Luccans Nicola Liena and Paolo Arnolfini, and the Sardinian Nicola Gallo. Nicola Liena was a famous lawyer who between 1536 and 1537 – in other words, before he left for Basle as an exile, where he stayed with Tegli – was given the task of compiling an inventory of the records of the Public Archive

and the Secret Archive of the Republic in Lucca<sup>15</sup>, while Paolo Arnolfini was a leading member of the family that gave accommodation to Celio Secondo Curione in his role as preceptor<sup>16</sup>.

Nicola Gallo is remembered above all for a famous trial held in Geneva in July 1558, at which, together with Valentino Gentili, he was accused of antitrinitarianism by a French informer, a certain Guyottin<sup>17</sup>. However compelling it may appear, for the moment there is no proof for the hypothesis that identifies this man with the *ingratissimus simul ac impurissimus sychofanta* mentioned by Tegli in the letter as responsible for a capital action against respectable men and of serious offences against him.

No mere brief mention but rather a full eulogy is dedicated by Tegli to Curione, whom we have already mentioned as one of Pietro Perna's friends<sup>18</sup>. The celebrated humanist, by then a point of reference for all Italian Protestants in Basle who at the time were fleeing their homeland, gave Tegli accommodation during his stay in Basle and must have been a close friend, judging by the fact that among the volumes in the library he left to Pietro Perna we also find the manuscript of his *Dialogi IV* annotated by himself and, presumably, also other writings by him<sup>19</sup>.

Curione probably also gave Tegli the idea of dedicating his Latin translation of *Il Principe* to the Pole Abraham Zbąski. He felt great admiration and friendship towards Zbąski, very probably one of the young Polish nobles who attended his university lectures in Basle.

A significant demonstration of this can be found not only in Tegli's own words but also in a letter from Curione's correspondence – to be precise the first in Book II – where he enquires of the young Zbąski, dubbed *nobilissimus adolescens* (sic!), whom he should ask to deliver to the dedicatee what was to become his main work, that is, *De amplitudine beati regni Dei. Dialogi sive libri duo*<sup>20</sup>. In this epistle, after a long preamble in which he expresses his concern and asks for news of the friend he has not heard from for a long time, Curione writes<sup>21</sup>:

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Salvatore Bongi, *Inventario del Regio Archivio di Stato in Lucca*, 4 vols (Lucca: Giusti, 1872-1888), I, *Sez. Archivi pubblici e Tarpea*.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Church, p. 121.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Cantimori, pp. 226-31, and Spini, pp. 145-7, for bibliographical information about Gallo.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *supra*, p.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Rotondò, pp. 314-5.

<sup>20</sup> On the content of this work and the trial against Curione that followed Vergerio's accusations, cf. Cantimori, pp. 188-225.

<sup>21</sup> Curio Coelius Secundus, *Selectarum Epistolarum Libri duo. Eiusdem Orationum (inter quas et Agrippae contra Monarchiam, et Mecoenatis pro Monarchia, adversariae orationes, [...], ex Dione latinitate donatae, continentur), Liber unus. Varia eruditione ac rerum cognitione referta omnia, magnaue parte nunc primum in lucem edita [...]*, (Basileae: Per Ioannem Oporinum, 1553), II, pp. 78-81 (pp. 80-81).



Venio nunc ad quoddam meum consilium tibi explicandum. Scripsi *De Amplitudine regni dei* opus varium, ex divinatorum oraculum penetralibus erutum, solidae consolationis ac doctrinae plenum. Dialogis duobus summa gravitate res agitur [...]. Hoc opus cui dicare cogitem nosti: sed prius velim audire consilium tuum et si probes per quem sit offerendum: per te ne an per alium, per te mihi conciliatum [...]. Est aliud opus in manibus, quod tibi, ubi de statu tuo certior factus fuero, dicabitur.

This text was published in 1550 – among other things, this date allows us to establish the *terminus ante quem* for the writing of the letter – and was subsequently sent to Sigismund II August, King of Poland from 1548 to 1572, where it enjoyed wide distribution. In this letter Curione promised to dedicate another work to Zbąski that he was writing at the time: very probably this was his commentary on Juvenal's *Satires*, which was to be published the following year and was in fact addressed to him, in line with Curione's custom in the last years of his life to dedicate his editions of classical texts to his Polish pupils<sup>22</sup>.

The information we have about this figure is rather fragmentary.

Abraham III Zbąski – not to be confused with the more famous Abraham I Zbąski, who died in 1442, head of the Hussites of Great Poland, and who was also magnate and judge in the city Poznan – was born in 1531 in Zbaszyn', a small town in west Poland, situated in the province of Wielkopolskie from which the noble house took its name. In 1551 we find him, as we have already said, studying under Curione in Basle, and then, after having probably also stayed a short time in Geneva, as we can infer from Tegli's own words (*dolebamque numquam antea mihi contigisse, ut prius tua familiaritate et consuetudine frui licuisset, quam Geneva in Italiam discederes*), in 1553 in Italy, from where he kept up contact with the circles of Reformed exiles in Basle and Geneva<sup>23</sup>. He was to die at a rather early age in 1578.

Independent of the biographical details of the figure in question, Silvestro Tegli's dedication of his Latin translation of *Il Principe* to a Polish noble, similarly to the dedications of numerous other works by Curione, re-emphasises the close connection and the frequent cultural and politico-religious exchanges which the Italian exiles living in Switzerland had with the leading members of the Reformed Polish church. One need only remember here the numerous journeys to Poland undertaken by outstanding figures in the Italian Reformist movement such as Lelio Sozzini, Giorgio Biandrata and Giovanni Alciati<sup>24</sup>.

Curione's request to Zbąski to evaluate the possibility of delivering *De amplitudine beati regni Dei* to Sigismund II August in person would however

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Cantimori, p. 263, n. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Henryk Barycz, 'Voyageurs et étudiants polonais à Genève à l'époque de Calvin et de Théodore de Bèze (1550-1650)', in *Échanges entre la Pologne et la Suisse du XIV<sup>e</sup> au XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1964), pp. 79-81, quoted in Anderson, p. 197.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Cantimori, pp. 145 ff. and 218 ff.

suggest that the young Pole had dealings with, or at least knew, the 'enlightened' sovereign, the principal champion of religious reform in Poland as well as the driving-force behind the intense cultural renaissance that marked his reign. The hypothesis is thus plausible (although at the moment it cannot be demonstrated on the basis of certain evidence) that Tegli's dedication to Zbąski might have had the indirect purpose of making this work known to this enlightened sovereign, who was also a great lover of literature and died leaving behind him a richly-stocked library. The figure of the prince envisaged by Machiavelli, as a symbol of political and religious freedom, might well inspire Sigismund, provided it was first, as it were, "cleansed" of those elements of unscrupulousness which Tegli certainly was aware of and which led to its being banned and condemned by certain clerical and political circles.

The whole of the second part of the prefatory letter was an attempt to justify reading Machiavelli's treatise and, hence, to validate the literary operation that Perna and Tegli were undertaking.

Tegli was well aware of the accusation levelled against Machiavelli (*Ceterum non sum nescius, cuius criminis nomine suspectum compluribus autorem hunc esse clamitent et quam causam afferant, cur ab eius lectione fortasse iudicent hominum animos esse avertendos*) and hence of the accusation that could be brought against his own work. He justifies himself in advance, however, with an animated *recusatio*, claiming that the human spirit is capable of distinguishing between good and evil and thus implicitly exhorting the reader to 'cleanse' the treatise of all those elements that might appear negative to the honest and the religious.

Tegli maintained that his purpose was to praise unreservedly the figure of the prince outlined by Machiavelli; only after clearing his mind of human ill-will, however, would the reader be able to recognise the figure's strong points and merits.

He did this in a bombastic style, full of the formulas of rhetoric and courtesy that were typical of sixteenth-century prose, especially epistolary prose, and deploying a range of classical references. These are evident in particular in the second part of the letter, where Tegli's description of his friendships and everyday life gives way to moral-philosophical reflections and an implicit *peroratio* of the project itself, with a consequent heightening of tone.

Thus, not only do we have references to classical and late ancient, as well as pagan and Christian, authors, but also both Latin and Greek quotations and *iuncturae*. The expression (with its proverbial tone) *Animus aeger semper errat* is, for example, an explicit reference to a tragic fragment by Ennius (no. 360. ed. Ribbeck), which Tegli changed into *Numquam non errat animus aeger*, in one of his typical stylemes (*numquam non per semper*) that we find quite often both in the prefatory letter and in the actual translation of *Il Principe*, and, more in general, in line with a typical practice among the

erudite during the Renaissance and humanist age to quote their models almost always from memory, which often resulted in inaccuracy. The source of the *iunctura* by Virgil, *Aen.* 3, 57: *Auri sacra fames*, is kept a secret, since repeated references to it in the medieval age had already made it famous<sup>25</sup>. Similarly left implicit is the provenance of the Greek quotation #####οὐ φιλοσόφῳν παίδεῖς πατριάρχει μέλλουσιν ἐῖναι πάντων αἰρετικῶν, which is a recasting of the corresponding Tertullian Latin expression *patriarchae haereticorum philosophi* (*adv. Hermogénem* 8 and *De anima* 3).

Tegli must have read the classical and patristic texts very assiduously, as is suggested by his close friendship with Curione (who, as we have seen, dedicated the last part of his life to publishing classical authors) and, above all, by the intention to compile a Greek-Latin dictionary he expressed in a letter to the spiritual heir of Erasmus of Rotterdam, Bonifacio Amerbach (this letter has come down to us in the ms. Basle, Universitätsbibliothek C.VI.35, no. 457). We can infer the date (1568) from Amerbach's hand-written annotation at the foot of the page *Misi Hopperi Dictionarium latinum-graecum inter non ligatos ord. 29, XI aprilis 1568*; in it we read:

Eccellente Signor mio osservandissimo, vi prego (quando non vi sia di scomodo) mandarmi per il presente latore un quinterno di quel libro del quale il signor Betti vi ha parlato, cioè greco et latino, ridotto in forma di dittionario, et che io haveva in animo di fare et che perciò ne volevate parlare col signor Oporino. Quello mi perdoni si uso presuntione con la Signoria Vostra, alla cui buona gratia mi offero et raccomando. Di Vostra Signoria amorevole Silvestro Telio<sup>26</sup>.

The second part of the prefatory letter contains not only references to classical texts but also to the Bible. The figure of Simon the traitor was very probably Simon Magus, who appears in the Acts of the Apostles (8, 9-25) and who Dante introduced into Canto XIX of the *Inferno* (vv. 1-6).

In this context, however, it is no accident that he makes reference to this figure, of all the possible figures in the Old and New Testament. Indeed the patristic tradition – whose ranks also include St Justin, mentioned by Tegli in the letter as an example of a man of scholarship and wisdom who defeated heresy<sup>27</sup> – considered Simon the first heretic, the founder of the Gnostic doctrine (this hypothesis has as yet to be demonstrated historically), as well as the initiator of the trade in holy objects that took its name from him: simony. And this was one of the main reasons for the heated conflict between Catholics and Lutherans in the sixteenth century.

Tegli was apparently using the figure of Simon Magus, together with other anti-heretic patristic quotations, to implicitly pre-empt the accusation of

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Petr. Alf. *Arabs* 161; Petr. Pict. *carm.* 12, 111 and 123; Nigell. *mirac.* 485, *Laur.* 335.

<sup>26</sup> The text of the letter is reproduced in Rotondò, p. 317.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Iustin. *apol.* I 26.

heresy levelled against the figure of Machiavelli and his writings – an accusation which, as we recall, led to the banning of *Il Principe* in 1559, in other words one year before the publication of the Latin translation – and, as a consequence, his own work.

The stylistic approach of the prefatory letter is also to be found in the translation of *Il Principe* itself. The author remains faithful to the original, except, as we shall see, in a few passages which he omits or deliberately modifies; however, he prefers to construct more complex sentences, following a tendency to lexical and syntactical *amplificatio* which (while typical of the time) clashes not only with the icastic incisiveness of Machiavelli's style but also with the intrinsic concision of the Latin language.

This tendency, common to other translations of *Il Principe* made in or around this period<sup>28</sup>, can be found in numerous passages, of which we will give only a small sample; it is clear from the very beginning of the work, where we read<sup>29</sup>:

#### I 1

O: Tutti gli stati, tutti e domini che hanno avuto et hanno imperio sopra gli uomini, sono stati e sono o repubbliche o principati

T: Quaecumque fuit umquam, aut est imperandi ratio, qua homines hominibus dominari consuevere, ea, aut res publica aut principatus appellatur.

Expressive redundancy often manifests itself in the rendering of a term with a hendiadys or a periphrastic verbal form that tones down the peremptoriness of the original, as is clear from the following examples:

#### III 1

O: Ma nel principato nuovo consistono le difficoltà: E prima, - se non è tutto nuovo, ma come membro: che si può chiamare tutto insieme quasi mixto, - le *variazioni* sue *nascono* in prima da una naturale difficoltà, quale è in tutti li principati nuovi ...

T: Sed in eo qui recens accessit principatu, difficultates continentur, tum maxime, si veluti pars adiuncta (ut sic in universum mixtum dici possit), non penitus est novus. Eius *vicissitudines et mutationes* ex ea primum difficultate *nasci videntur*

#### III 3

O: ... perché sempre, ancora che uno sia *fortissimo* in sulli exerciti, ha bisogno del *favore* de' provinciali ad entrare in una provincia

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. the remarks on style made *passim* in other contributions in this miscellany.

<sup>29</sup> In this and in all the passages quoted, the original is marked with the letter "O" and the Latin translation with the letter "T". Machiavelli's original follows the text contained in Niccolò Machiavelli, *De principatibus*, ed. by Giorgio Inglese, *Fonti per la storia dell'Italia medievale. Antiquitates* 1 (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1994).

T: Quamvis enim in copiis *munitissimus* sit quis *et praepotens*, provinciam tamen ut aliquam subeat, *ope* indiget provincialium *et favore*

III 12

O: ... come *ha fatto* il Turco di Grecia

T: Quemadmodum Turca ipse in Graecia *faciundum censuit*.

The text is made less incisive by the repeated replacement of impersonal forms by personal forms, where the recurrent expression *come è detto* is always translated as *ut dixi* and the impersonal passive verbs often render explicit the subject *princeps*, a term used generically also to translate the terms ‘marchese’ (marquis) and ‘duca’ (duke).

The search for rhetorical *ornatus* is evident in the use of archaisms (*quum* instead of *cum*, forms ending in *-undus* instead of *-endus*), *variationes*, diptotes and anaphora, as the following examples demonstrate:

III 13

O: ... standovi ... / ... non vi stando ...

T: *Praesens* ... / ... *se absente* ...

III 18

O: ... si vendicano delle leggieri offese, delle gravi non possono

T: Nam leviores *ulciscunt* iniurias, graviore *ulcisci* nequeunt

III 40

O: qui è lo errore et il biasimo

T: *hic* vitium, *hic* error inest

At times the original is not translated *ad verbum*, but by using corresponding proverbial Latin expressions, as in the following case:

IX 20

O: ... chi fonda in sul populo fonda in sul fango

T: ... qui populari innititur aura, domum in luto extruit.

Apart from these slight modifications, by and large dictated by the stylistic taste of the time, there are others (albeit few in number) which correspond to criteria that have to do with ideology and content.

One need only look at one significant example from Chap. XVIII, one of the most fundamental in Machiavelli's treatise, as it contains a discussion of the theme of the prince's loyalty (*Quomodo fides a principibus sit servanda*). Here Tegli omits the long sentence from § 1 completely,

nondimanco si vede per experienza nelli nostri tempi quelli principi avere fatto gran cose, che della fede hanno tenuto poco conto e che hanno saputo con l'astuzia aggirare e cervelli delli uomini: et alla fine hanno superato quelli che si sono fondati in sulla realtà,

which, alluding to Louis XII, describes how unscrupulous rulers of the time were more successful than those who adhered to the principle of loyalty. Also in § 12-13 Tegli initially reworks rather than translates the first sentences, according to the technique of rhetorical *amplificatio* we have already illustrated; this is clear in the following comparison:

O: [12] Io non voglio delli exempli freschi tacerne uno. Alexandro VI non fece mai altro, non pensò mai ad altro che a ingannare uomini, e sempre trovò subietto da poterlo fare: e non fu mai uomo che avessi maggiore efficacia in asseverare, e con maggiori iuramenti affermassi una cosa, che la osservassi meno; nondimeno sempre gli succederono gl'inganni ad votum, perché conosceva bene questa parte del mondo. [13] A uno principe adunque non è necessario avere in fatto tutte le soprascritte qualità, ma è bene necessario parere di averle;

T.: [12] Nolim Alexandri Sexti Pont. Max. recens exemplum silentio praeteritum. Is nihil quam mortalium impostorem egit, nihil quam ad omnem militiam et fraudem (quo hominum genus falleret) mentem suam exercuit. Atqui reperit subiectam quam tractaret materiam. In asseverando autem qui magis fuerit efficax, aut qui speciosus iuraris iusiurandum, vicissimque qui minus praestiterit, nemo umquam fuit: nihilo secius doli numquam non commode ei cesserunt. Hanc enim fallendi artem, moresque hominum probe callebat. [13] Proinde non est quod princeps eas omnes superius descriptas virtutes ostendet: sunt enim adversus tales dissimulandae saepenumero callidaeque tegendae;

But then he completely leaves out the long passage that follows, in which Machiavelli argues, with a scientific and categorical rationality that borders on unscrupulousness, that the new prince is obliged to act against the human virtues:

anzi ardirò di dire questo: che, avendole e osservandole sempre, sono dannose, e, parendo di averle, sono utili; come parere piatoso, fedele, umano, intero, relligioso, et essere: ma stare in modo edificato con lo animo che, bisognando non essere, tu possa e sappia diventare il contrario. [14] Et hassi ad intendere questo, che uno principe e maxime uno principe nuovo non può osservare tutte quelle cose per le quali gli uomini sono tenuti buoni, sendo spesso necessitato, per mantenere lo stato, operare contro alla fede, contro alla carità, contro alla umanità, contro alla religione.

Bearing in mind the prefatory letter, one might think that in this case Tegli was keen to omit a morally fraught passage. However, it is difficult to

understand why other places in the text that were equally problematic for the morality of the time were not given the same treatment.

We have no certain information about the Italian edition which Tegli used for his translation. Possible aid comes from two interpretative misunderstandings we find in Tegli's translation which were the same as those found in some Italian editions.

The first, at the beginning of Chap. XVI, is his mistaken reading of *temuto* for *tenuto*, which results in an inversion of the meaning of the sentence. This was already present in the *editio princeps* of Machiavelli's work printed posthumously by Antonio Blado in 1532<sup>30</sup> and repeated in all editions up until 1600:

O: [1] Cominciandomi adunque alle prime soprascripte qualità, dico come sarebbe bene essere tenuto liberale. [2] Nondimanco la liberalità, usata in modo che tu sia tenuto, ti offende ...

T: Initium itaque mihi sumens ab iis, quae inter iam dicta primum locum sunt sortita, non negarim fore optimum, ut princeps habeatur liberalis: nihilominus ita liberalitate, uti ut *metuaris*, sane obest.

The second is at the beginning of § 9 of Chap. XXI: the normalisation of the name Bernabò Visconti to Bernardo (*Bernardus* in Latin) is something which, among the editions previous to Tegli's, we also find in Blado:

O: Giova ancora assai ad uno principe dare di sé exempli rari circa a' governi di dentro, - simili a quegli che si narrano di messer *Bernabò* da Milano, - ...

T.: Plurimum item refert, principem rara de se exempla in urbana administratione praebere et quae proxime iis accedat quae *Bernardi* Mediolanensis fuisse dicuntur

This detail suggests that Tegli may have followed this text or at least one based on it and, at any rate, an Italian text. The only available translation of *Il Principe* before 1560 was Guillaume Cappel's French version, published in Paris in 1553 by Estienne<sup>31</sup>, and it is difficult to believe that among the Italian

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<sup>30</sup> *Il Principe di Niccolò Machiavelli. Facsimile dell'edizione originale impressa in Roma da Antonio Blado nel 1532*, ed. by Luigi Firpo, introd. by Federico Chabod (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1961).

<sup>31</sup> The French translation by Jacques de Vintimille, which came out in 1546, was written essentially for private use and not intended for public distribution. Cf. the paper in this volume by Nella Bianchi Bensimon. Of fundamental importance on the handwritten tradition and the translations of *Il Principe* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is Adolf Gerber, *Niccolò Machiavelli. Die Handschriften, Ausgaben und Übersetzungen seiner Werke im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Mit 147 Faksimiles und zahlreichen Auszügen. Eine kritisch-bibliographische Untersuchung*, 3 vols (Gotha: Perthes, 1912-1913), reprinted and edited by Luigi Firpo (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1962). This work, together with *Machiavelli's The Prince. An Elizabethan Translation, edited with an introduction and notes from a manuscript in the collection of Mr. Jules Furthman*, ed. by Harding Craig (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press,

exiles in Basle this would have replaced, in terms of popularity and diffusion, the Italian version that had been circulating for much longer.

Tegli's translation enjoyed great fame and became one of the vehicles of transmission of Machiavelli's political doctrine across the whole of Europe, especially northern Europe. Together with Amelot's French translation, reprinted three times by the end of the seventeenth century<sup>32</sup>, it became the reference text for other translations into national languages, and, in some cases (Scandinavia is a case in point<sup>33</sup>) was one of the reasons why translation of the treatise into national languages was delayed for such a long time, given that it was already available in a form universally accessible to the cultural world of the time.

Although in the sixteenth century there was a copy in London in the large personal library (comprising more than 4000 books and 700 manuscripts) belonging to the mathematician, magician and astrologist John Dee<sup>34</sup>, perhaps as a result of his repeated trips to Europe<sup>35</sup> and his close contact with Albert Laski, grandson of the famous Polish Reformer Jan Laski, who between 1583 and 1589 gave him lodgings in Poland, very few other copies of the original 1560 version could have been in circulation. Proof of this is the fact that until today, according to my research, very few libraries keep copies of it; the ones that do include the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, the Universitätsbibliothek in Greifswald, the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt in Halle, and the British Library in London<sup>36</sup>.

Responsible for spreading the work widely were more probably its numerous re-printings and editions. In all there were at least 11 in the space of more than 80 years, which also testifies to the text's long-lasting success. The first was printed by Perna in 1570 and seems to have been a straightforward re-printing of the original translation. Tegli must definitely have still been alive that year, given that the Calvinist French philosopher

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1944), pp. XVI-XVII, is also relevant to the question of the reprintings and re-publications of Tegli's translation.

<sup>32</sup> *Le prince de Nicolas Machiavel, secrétaire & citoyen de Florence, traduit et commenté par Nicolas-Abraham Amelot, Sieur de la Houssaie*, Amsterdam, chez Henri Wetstein 1683. The three reprintings came out in 1684, 1686 and 1694.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. the article by Paolo Marelli elsewhere in this book.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *John Dee's Library Catalogue*, ed. by Julian Roberts and Andrew G. Watson (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1990), no. 756.

<sup>35</sup> Basle may very well have been one of the various cultural centres in Europe visited by this versatile English intellectual, devotee of astrology, astronomy, alchemy, mathematics and occultism. Already by the end of the 1550s, Basle, with the publication of works of Marsilio Ficino, Plato, the *Corpus Hermeticum* and, among others, the printing works owned by Pietro Perna, had become one of the most important European centres for the spread of such sciences (cf. Bietenholz, pp. 115-58 *passim* and Rotondò, p. 343).

<sup>36</sup> The British Museum is where I inspected the microfilm of the five hundred or so translations of Tegli I consulted for the purpose of writing this article.



Pierre de la Ramée, in his oration *Basle, ad senatum populumque Basiliensem*, written between 1570 and 1571, refers to him in the present, saying expressly<sup>37</sup>:

Francisco Betho et Sylvestro Teglio vix Italia duos Italos candidiores et verae pietatis amantiores apposuerit. Bethus patriam patrio sermone christianismi sacris initiat. Teglius Machiavelli Principem latine loquentem fecit, maioraque nominis sui monumenta quotidie *molitur*.

It was, however, the 1580 edition that really marked the beginning of the circulation and popularity of the translation. Tegli must have died only shortly before this, as can be deduced from documents that refer to him as dead. The first is an act of censorship dated 1574, relative to the debate about Pietro Perna's publication of Castellione's *De predestinatione*, where we read that Tegli died in the suburb of St. Johann, and his widow, in order to pay back a debt incurred by her husband, had to part with his library, which included the treatise by the Savoyard humanist<sup>38</sup>.

The other is a letter from Giovanni Bernardino Bonifacio (who was such a close friend of Tegli that he supervised his work plans) to Basilio Amerbach which says<sup>39</sup>:

Audio enim decessisse Silvestrum Telium uxorem suam, honestissimam feminam, in Daciam ad Blandratam iam ivisse.

This letter, kept in ms. G.II.31, no. 221 in Basle's Universitätsbibliothek and dated simply 24 March, can be traced with sufficient certainty to the year 1574. What also makes it interesting, however, is the reference to Giorgio Biandatra (or Blandrata), «one of the astutest of the Italian group of heretics»<sup>40</sup>, an antitrinitarian doctor, with whom Tegli (in Geneva in May 1558) had been convoked (together with Alciati) to the consistory of the Italian Church in the presence of Calvin<sup>41</sup>.

The fact that Tegli's widow later took refuge with Biandatra is an indication of the two men's close relationship over the next few years. After wandering

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<sup>37</sup> Cited in Kaegi, p. 28, n. 68. Kaegi gives 1571 as the date of composition of the oration, whereas the modern edition Petrus Ramus, *Basilea. Eine Rede an die Stadt Basel aus dem Jahre 1570. Lateinisch und Deutsch. Übersetzt und eingeleitet von Hans Fleig* (Basel: Basilisk-Verlag, 1944) puts it a year earlier. On Francesco Betti, a reformed Roman noble living in exile in Basle and a friend of Curione (this is the probable reason for his contacts with Tegli), cf. Cantimori, pp. 287-91. On the ties between Betti and Tegli, cf. also *supra*, p.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Kaegi, p. 28. The text of the document given by Kaegi is full of gaps and not very clear, perhaps partly because of errors of transcription. For this reason I shall not give the full quotation.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted by Rotondò, p. 315, n. 117. On the confidential relationship between Bonifacio and Tegli, cf. *id.*, p. 316.

<sup>40</sup> Cantimori, p. 213 and ff.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. .

around Poland, Italy and Switzerland, in 1562 Biandatra settled in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Julia) in Transylvania, which is where he received Tegli's widow<sup>42</sup>. But what especially deserves to be remembered about him is his work as a doctor at the court of the Queen of Poland, Bona Sforza, wife of Sigismund II August, between 1540 and 1544, during one of his first stays in Poland. This detail would reinforce the weak indirect link between Tegli, his translation and the Polish king which we hypothesised earlier in relation to the dedication.

In 1580, then, only a few years after Tegli's death, Perna gave the task of revising the Latin edition of *Il Principe* to Nicola Stupano, a young doctor and professor of philosophy at the University of Basle who was later, in 1578, to become its vice-chancellor, and who was also one of Celio Secondo Curione's pupils<sup>43</sup>.

For more than ten years Stupano had been working at Perna's printing house, mostly on Latin translations of Italian and French works of history, natural history and medicine from the late fifteenth century, and very probably had in mind to publish the complete works of Machiavelli; and judging by his preface to the new Latin translation of *Il Principe*, where he says expressly ... *Nicolai Machiavelli scripta, quae sunt partim politica, partim historica, partim denique de ratione bellum gerendi* (... 'the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, which are in part political, in part historical, in part about how to conduct a war'), he must have known Machiavelli very well.

However, with civil society – but even more so the Church – now taking a much harsher view of Machiavelli than twenty years earlier, Perna decided to postpone publication, which he had probably intended to undertake personally<sup>44</sup>, and limited himself to re-publishing the previous Latin version of *Il Principe*, with some modifications from the previous edition and with the addition of other writings for and against absolutist forms of government. These innovations are highlighted in the heading on the frontispiece, which reads:

Nicolai Machiavelli Princeps, ex Sylvestri Telii Fulginatis traductione diligenter emendata. Adiecta sunt eiusdem argumenti aliorum quorundam contra Machiavellum scripta de potestate et officio Principum et contra tyrannos. Basileae, ex Officina Petri Perna, MDXXC.

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<sup>42</sup> On Biandatra's European travels and activities, cf. Cantimori, pp. 213-25 and 313-22.

<sup>43</sup> For biographical information about this figure, his alternating, stormy relations with Pietro Perna and the complicated affair surrounding the re-publication of the Latin translation of *Il Principe* that I refer to here and subsequently, cf. Kaegi, in particular pp. 5-6, 26-36.

<sup>44</sup> However, the following decade did see the publication in Basle in Latin or German of *I discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio, L'arte della guerra* and perhaps also the *Istorie fiorentine*, all apparently by Perna (cf. Kaegi, p. 28, n. 70).

The aim of these added texts was to temper the disruptive and subversive power of Machiavelli's political thought and for this reason anti-Machiavellian writings were chosen: an anonymous fragment *Ex cuiusdam scripto de magistratu*, the orations *Pro monarchia* and *Contra monarchia* held before Augustus respectively by Mecenate and Agrippa in the LIIth book of the *Historia Romana* by Cassius Dio (given here in the Latin translation by Celio Secondo Curione), and a small work entitled *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*. Their inspiration becomes clear if we look at the ending of the first<sup>45</sup>:

Paulus item scripsit: 'Omnes potestates, quaecumque sunt, a Deo esse ordinas'. Et Christus respondit Pilato: 'Non haberes potestatem adversus me ullam, nisi tibi datum esset desuper'. His testimoniis et rationibus conficitur, deum esse veram ac propriam causam magistratum.

In this way printer and translator tried jointly to steer clear of the city's politico-cultural problems, using greater prudence than had been shown in the 1560 edition. Nonetheless, problems cropped up because of Stupano's ingenuous and impulsive thoughtlessness.

For the new edition of 1580 he decided to replace Tegli's dedicatory epistle to Abraham Sbaški (which was not to appear again in any of the later editions of his Latin translation of *Il Principe*) with a prefatory dedication to Jakob Christoph Blarer, Bishop of Basle after 1575, motivated primarily by personal and family interests.

When Perna saw the esteem and courtesy that Stupano showed towards those whose intrepid determination to reaffirm in Basle not only the Catholic religion but also the power of the episcopal principality had brought them into harsh conflict with the city over a period of some years (which even had to be regulated by a federal arbiter), he first tried unsuccessfully to persuade the young physician to leave out the dedicatory letter; then, given the latter's insistence, he decided to publish the new Latin edition as it had originally been planned<sup>46</sup>; and finally, he went on to reprint a second version of it, partially corrected by Stupano in the preface in response to pressure from Theodor Zwinger and Basilius Amerbach (respectively, incumbent and future vice-chancellor of the University of Basle), who had been alerted by Perna himself.

However, the scandal provoked by this edition, which in December 1580 was to lead to Stupano being suspended from his university position for three years, was to induce Perna to print a third edition, replacing the offending dedicatory letter with a simple introduction (*Typographus candido lectore*), as had in fact been his intention in the first of the three 1580 versions, and

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Kaegi, p. 30, n. 72.

<sup>46</sup> This first version was probably distributed against Perna's will. Perna subsequently took out a case against Stupano for damages, and the affair culminated in a violent physical altercation between the two in 1581, in which the printer came off worse.

without indicating the name of his printing works next to the year and place of publication.

Despite these barely masked expedients, however, Perna added to the anti-Machiavellian texts Paolo Giovio's eulogy to Machiavelli in two other versions, as well as two epitaphs. Moreover, after the recent massacres perpetrated by the Huguenots, he did not hold back from extolling the figure of Machiavelli and his thought between the lines in his preface, which concludes thus<sup>47</sup>:

Interrogo igitur vos, lectores, qui (sic!) nam melius doceat, Machiavellus ne, qui principatum acquirere et in pace retinere, nullius aut paucorum exitio, docet, an isti, qui, quod ipsi regnare non possunt neque sciunt, per tot iam annos, tot miriadas animarum et corporum, altercando et feriendo, Orco dimiserunt, urbes et provincias pervastarunt neque vastationi finem imposuerunt?

These words can be seen as putting the seal on the vigorous defence of and admiration for Machiavelli shown by Pietro Perna over a period of more than twenty years. Two years later the elderly Luccan printer died, probably struck down by the plague that swept the city of Basle, and with his death the destiny of Tegli's translation soon shifted away from Basle for good.

Except for the 1589 edition, which gives no date or place of publication but which according to information in the British Museum catalogue was also printed in Basle, the 1595 and 1599 editions were printed in Hanover by Guglielmo Antonio, while the 1599 edition was printed at Montbéliard by Jacques Foillet<sup>48</sup>.

These four editions have the same content as the 1580 edition, while the one published in 1600 at Ursel also added *Judicium de Nicolai Machiavelli et Ioannis Bodini quibusdam scriptis* by the Jesuit Antonio Possevino.

In this form Tegli's translation was to be published a further four times, twice in Frankfurt (in 1608 and 1622) and twice more in Lyon (in 1643 and 1648).

In conclusion, as emerges clearly between the lines of this rapid review of the numerous versions of Tegli's Latin *Il Principe* published over a period of more than eighty years, the success of the work is not based on maintaining its original spirit.

Over these 11 editions – 14 if we also count the two re-printings in 1580 and 1599 – the changes in the times and the waning of the Reformist political and cultural fervour that had seen its genesis progressively depleted the work of its

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Kaegi, pp. 45-6, n. 104.

<sup>48</sup> The year before Foillet himself had published the Latin translation of the *Discorsi sull'arte della guerra*, very probably edited by Niccolò Stupano, who, after the recent affair of the publication of his Latin version of *Il Principe* del 1580, preferred to remain anonymous (cf. Kaegi, pp. 47-8).

enthusiastic celebration of Machiavelli's political thought and transmuted it rather into a text against Machiavelli.

It is no accident therefore that Hermann Conring's 1660 Latin translation of *Il Principe*, which was probably more famous than Tegli's, bears the title:

Princeps aliaque nonnulla ex Italico Latine nunc demum partim versa, partim infinitis locis sensus melioris ergo castigata, curante Hermanno Conringio.

where, without entering into the specific content of the text, the participle *castigata* seems to me to be particularly significant.

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