THE PRINCE OF THE REVOLUTION: MACHIAVELLI'S INFLUENCES ON THE STATECRAFT OF NAPOLEONIC FRANCE

by

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ABSTRACT

ALEC SLAWICH. The Prince Of The Revolution: Machiavelli's Influences On The Statecraft Of Napoleonic France.
(Under the direction of DR. CHRISTINE HAYNES)

Napoleon Bonaparte's seizure of power in November 1799 marked the beginning of a paradoxical era of reform in France based on his childhood education. The emperor's studies taught him the tactics of those he viewed as "great conquerors" such as Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. However, historians have overlooked how Napoleon was inspired by the famed Italian philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli, whose work *The Prince* promoted ideals of political pragmatism and centralized state building. Scholarly debates surrounding Napoleon place his political and personal character within the context of the French Revolution. As a result, the emperor's domestic policies are depicted as by-products of various labels for his personal character: military genius, charismatic opportunist, revolutionary ideologue, and realistic pragmatist. Building on conceptions of the French leader as pragmatic, this work argues that Machiavelli's philosophies shaped Napoleon's political character and domestic reforms by legitimizing his dictatorial tactics as necessary tools to establish stable institutions. Specifically, I chronicle how these ideas shaped his reforms in four key areas of French society he perceived to be unstable from the revolution: religion, education, property rights, and gender roles. While labels such as "opportunist" and "pragmatist" effectively illustrate the contradictions between Bonapartism and French revolutionary politics, they fail to explain why these tensions exist to begin with. By considering the influences of Machiavelli on his political character, I ground Napoleon's success as a politician compared to prior revolutionary regimes within his unique education rather than propagandized images depicting the emperor as glorious and powerful.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family and friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my parents Debra and Steve, whose words of love and encouragement (and homemade cups of coffee) continue to guide my work even now. I extend this gratitude to my friends Christian, Lora, Michael and Nicole, whom I consider very special and whose companionship I (continue to) cherish deeply.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The year was 1810; the location: the commune of Fontainebleau. The Roman sculptor Antonio Canova, previously commissioned in the early days of the First French Empire (1804-1814) to design the emperor's bust, approached Napoleon to provide updates regarding the construction of a new imperial garden created for the city-state of Venice. During their time together, the subject of Italian political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli came up in passing. Reflecting on the city's historical reputation for prioritizing mercantile trade over militarism, Canova argued how Venice would have benefitted from the rule of a general similar to Napoleon to become a great European power.[1] To make his point, Canova referenced Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, which cited consuls' ability to make decisions on their own as critical to Rome's military success and a vital check against coups by placating consular ambitions:

> "If the senate had wished for a consul to proceed in war little by little according to what tasks they entrusted to him, they would have made him less diligent and slower, because he would have felt that the glory of the victory was not entirely his . . . For this reason, they wanted the consul to act on his own and for the glory to be entirely his own, his love of which they judged to be the best check and rule of thumb to make him do his best"[2]

Agreeing with the dangers that military might posed to a republic, Napoleon responded: "I told the Directory myself, that if they would always have war, some man would arise who would seize the reins of government."[3] Not only had the emperor retroactively prophesied his own rise to power, but he had also appreciated the irony of Machiavelli's warnings against allowing military power to function unchecked in a civilian republic.

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[1] Ruth Scurr, *Napoleon: A Life Told in Gardens and Shadows* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2021), 207.
[2] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* (*Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*), trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (1531; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 245.
[3] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Scurr, *Napoleon: A Life Told in Gardens and Shadows*, 207.

Following the chaos of the French Revolution (1789 - 1799), Napoleon Bonaparte sought to consolidate power within the French state. In doing so, he relied on the experiences and education of his youth. Born in 1769 to a minor noble family on Corsica a year after the French conquest of the island, Napoleon initially grew to have a staunch Corsican patriotism during his adolescence.[4] Upon being sent to train at the Brienne-le Château military academy in northern France circa May 1779, the future emperor excelled in military and political leadership in spite of his continental schoolmates' mockery of his Corsican roots. As Napoleon's secretary (and then schoolmate) Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne later recalled in his memoirs, "[the French leader's] disposition to meditate on the subjugation of Corsica, and the impressions which he had received in his youth . . . led him to seek solitude."[5] As a result, Napoleon aimed to set himself apart from his peers as a "great captain" in the French army.[6] To make this dream a reality, his personal studies comprised the tactics of those he viewed as "great conquerors" such as Julius Caesar, Hannibal Barca, and Alexander the Great.[7]

Historians have long considered how Napoleon's early experiences shaped his reign, yet few have carefully analyzed how the works of Machiavelli may have influenced the emperor. On one hand, the Italian philosopher's work *The Prince* (1513), known for offering European rulers advice on how to pursue and maintain power, is thought to have been a source of inspiration for Napoleon.[8] As philosopher Hannah Arendt described, Machiavelli instilled a "passionate yearning to revive the spirit and the institution of Roman antiquity" during the so-called "Age of Revolution," and "became so characteristic of the [republican] political thought of the eighteenth

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[4] Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2014), 5-6.
[5] Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte* (1836), quoted in Ibid., 14.
[6] Ibid., 10-11.
[7] Ibid., 163-165.
[8] Hilary Gatti, *Ideas of Liberty in Early Modern Europe: From Machiavelli to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 14.

century."[9] Given Napoleon's childhood fascination with Rome and republican theorists such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, authors who provided a topical overlap would have piqued his interest. As scholar Grattan Freyer noted, an annotated copy of the work discovered at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 was thought to have belonged to Napoleon. However, subsequent scholars have since determined this document to be a forgery attributed to one of his critics: Abbot Guillon, a royalist seeking to quell revolutionary sentiments after Napoleon's downfall.[10] Nevertheless, contemporaries such as the Comte Molé observed the emperor making explicit references to this work when articulating his policy goals. As he recalled of a Conseil d'Etat meeting in March 1806, the French leader declared that he was "sometimes fox and sometimes lion. The whole secret of government consists of knowing when to be the one and when the other."[11] From a chapter of *The Prince* titled "Concerning the Way in Which Princes Should Keep Faith," Napoleon referenced a single principle that shaped his understanding of political leadership: "princes" must tailor their image and actions to achieve their ultimate goal—the pursuit of power.

While Napoleon never cited *The Prince* directly prior to his seizure of power in 1799, the similarities between Machiavelli's advice and Napoleon's actions throughout the French Revolution (1789-1799) are uncanny. Despite being born into minor Corsican nobility, few opportunities for military promotion existed under the pre-1789 Old Regime due to the royal court's favoritism of French-born aristocracy for the officer corps.[12] As a result, Napoleon

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[9] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 30.
[10] Grattan Freyer, "The Reputation of Machiavelli," *Hermathena*, no. 56 (1940): 161-162.
[11] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Marquis de Noailles, *The Life and Memoirs of Comte Molé* (London: Hutchinson, 1923), 90.
[12] For context, French nobility were traditionally expected to serve in one of two careers within the royal court of the Old Regime. On one hand, "nobles of the robe" served as the king's bureaucrats and advisors (or *courtiers*), while "nobles of the sword" served as the nation's military generals during wartime.

committed himself to defending the revolutionary National Convention and its radical Montagnard leadership against attempted counter-coups. From August to December of 1793, Napoleon successfully repelled British ships attempting to supply royalist rebels in the southern port city of Toulon, resulting in his promotion to the rank of brigadier general. He hoped that his service would protect him from the wrath of Maximilien Robespierre and the ruling Committee of Public Safety (June 1793 - July 1794), whose "Reign of Terror" threatened death by guillotine against all who criticized revolutionary policies. By the time of Robespierre's overthrow and execution on July 28, the committee had sentenced roughly 40,000 people to death by guillotine for suspected "crimes against liberty."[13] Napoleon briefly found himself under threat of execution the following month due to his association with Robespierre's brother Augustin. However, Napoleon's military notoriety in Toulon prompted the incoming "Thermidorians" to recruit him as a capable general for the French army.[14] By mirroring Machiavelli's advice on the pursuit of power, Napoleon leveraged his actions to achieve unprecedented social mobility.

The instability of the subsequent Directory regime (1795-1799) provided Napoleon with more opportunities to use Machiavelli's advice for his benefit. Initially, architects of the new government's Constitution of the Year III (1795) hoped to stabilize the revolutionary French Republic in the wake of Robespierre's terror.[15] However, royalist attempts to restore the Old Regime's monarchy enabled Napoleon to consolidate power at the Directory's expense. For example, Napoleon's brutal suppression of monarchists during the 13 Vendémiaire insurrection (October 1795) led Directory leader Paul Barras to bestow a promotion to Major General on him

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[13] Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror during the French Revolution: A Statistical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 26–37.
[14] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 55.
[15] Jeremy Popkin, *A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 449.

and gave the Corsican command of France's Army of the Interior. During this time, Napoleon also met and married his wife Josephine de Beauharnais before embarking on his Italian campaign (1796-1797) two days later.[16] After defeating the Austrians at the Battle of Lodi (May 1796) and conquering various Italian city-states along the way, Napoleon oversaw the signing of a peace treaty with Austria and its allies in October 1797.[17] In doing so, he projected an image of himself as the "savior" of the French Republic for single-handedly winning a war that other generals in service to the ruling Thermidorian elite could not. Napoleon also reorganized his conquered territories into French-controlled "sister republics" governed by constitutions he personally wrote for them. Fearing an attempted takeover, the ruling Directory briefly sent Napoleon on an expedition to Egypt (1798-1799) to undermine British access to India. While the campaign ultimately proved to be a failure, propagandized accounts of skirmishes with Anglo-Ottoman forces in the region further elevated Napoleon's image among the French public before he returned to Paris in October 1799. Capitalizing on his reputation and assisted by leading statesmen such as Emmanuel Joseph Sieyes, Napoleon launched the successful coup of 18 Brumaire against the unpopular government a month later.[18] Once again, Napoleon seemingly embraced Machiavelli's advice by tailoring his actions—military victories and attempts at statebuilding—to seize power in France.

Using similar observations, a small handful of scholars have attempted to draw parallels between Machiavelli's philosophies and Napoleon's actions, but failed to explore the full extent of this influence on the French leader's rule. French scholar Thierry Lentz offered one such discussion, stating how "*The Prince* seems to have been written for [Napoleon]," who possessed

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[16] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 71.
[17] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 492.
[18] Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), xi-xiii.

Machiavelli's prized quality of "virtue." Specifically, he argues how "virtue, in fact, is not a moral but a political concept that evokes the talents, strength of character, luck, and skill of the statesman."[19] However, Lentz relegates his comparisons to praising Napoleon's character as larger-than-life rather than exploring any direct influences Machiavelli may have had. Alternatively, Peter Hicks took note of Napoleon's fascination with Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy* (1517), which offered readers a critical analysis of the Roman Republic and its institutions. While the emperor's lifetime interest in Caesar and his exploits are well known, his addition of this work to his portable library in 1808 indicated an underlying fascination with the Italian philosopher.[20] Moreover, Hicks lists several chapter titles from Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy* that run parallel with political issues Napoleon faced throughout his rule:

> "Chapter VI: Whether it is possible to establish in Rome a government capable of putting an end to the enmities existing between the Nobles and the People.
>
> Chapter IX: To found a new republic, or to reform entirely the old institutions of an existing one, must be the work of one man only.
>
> Chapter XII: The importance of giving religion a prominent influence in a state, and how Italy was ruined because she failed in this respect through the conduct of the Church in Rome.
>
> Chapter XXIV: Well-ordered republics establish punishments and rewards for their citizens, but never set off one against the other."[21]

Curiously, Hicks does not provide any further analysis on the matter, thus failing to explain the extent of Machiavelli's influence on Napoleon.

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[19] Thierry Lentz, *Nouvelle histoire du Premier Empire, tome 3: La France et L'Europe de Napoléon (1804-1814)* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 12.
[20] Peter Hicks, "Napoleon as a Politician," in Michael Broers, Peter Hicks, and Agustín Guimerá, eds., *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture. War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 76.
[21] Ibid., 77-78.

Nonetheless, Hicks's point offers insight into historians' ongoing debates as to whether Napoleon's domestic reforms continued or betrayed the French Revolution's ideals of liberty and equality. For example, the French leader's 1801 Concordat with Pope Pius VII restored the Catholic Church and promoted a policy of religious freedom for French citizens. However, Napoleon justified the measure as merely using religion as a powerful tool that "keeps rich men . . . from being massacred by the poor."[22] Second, the French leader's Law of 11 Floréal in 1802 produced a new generation of future soldiers and bureaucrats loyal to the ideals of the revolution (and by extension, the emperor himself) by establishing forty-five state secondary schools (or *lycées*).[23] Concurrently, Napoleon established awards such as the Legion of Honor to designate France's most capable talent for recruitment into his regime. Finally, his Napoleonic Code of 1804 secured citizenship and property rights for the average Frenchman while centralizing roughly 366 local law codes throughout France.[24] However, the code's patriarchal marriage and family estate regulations stripped women's rights to divorce and to inherit or own property, giving husbands full legal control over their wives.[25] On the surface, these seeming contradictions reflect opposing views of Napoleon as an ideologue (both for and against the French Revolution) postulated by Napoleonic scholars. However, this dichotomy also appears to result from the pragmatic understanding of politics Napoleon acquired from Machiavelli's works.

This ambiguous relationship between Napoleon's actions and Machiavelli's philosophies raises the following questions: How did Machiavelli's philosophies shape Napoleon's politics over time? What role did Machiavelli's political philosophies play in shaping Napoleon's

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[22] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 272.
[23] Ibid., 280-281.
[24] Ibid., 275.
[25] Ibid., 277-278.

domestic reforms to the French state following his seizure of power in 1799? By answering these questions, I showcase how Machiavelli's advice shaped stable political institutions in Napoleonic France absent in prior revolutionary regimes. In order to do so, however, we must first consider Napoleon's personal and political character.

I.1 How Many Historiographies There Are and What Means They Are Argued

Historiographical debates surrounding Napoleon and his rule place the political and personal character of his leadership within the context of the broader French Revolution. Initial characterizations of the emperor stemmed from the lingering (albeit limited) perception of Napoleon as a "great man" of history. Historian Frank Preston Stearns embodied this understanding in his 1903 essay characterizing Napoleon as "the most perfectly developed man of action" within the political chaos of the French Revolution. Throughout his work *Napoleon and Machiavelli: Two Essays in Political Science*, Stearns cited the qualities of "determination, readiness, versatility . . . mental composure, firmness, and courage" as evidence of the emperor's "great man" status.[26] In doing so, he argued how Napoleon's rise to power had been inevitable on account of how his personal character served as a guiding light for France in stark contrast to the Directory government's instability. Contrary to what his work's title implies, Stearns never establishes any direct connection between Napoleon and Machiavelli, but rather sought to highlight both individuals' pragmatic approaches to political instability within their respective time periods. In terms of Napoleon's political character, Stearns noted that "as an army officer, he naturally would have more confidence in subordination as a political principle than equal rights," but had to abide by the principles of equality to maintain legitimacy under French

[26] Frank Preston Stearns, *Napoleon and Machiavelli: Two Essays in Political Science* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1903), 1-2.

revolutionary law.[27] By not taking a clear stance on Napoleon's political character, Stearns laid the foundation for subsequent historians' analyses of the subject.

Unfortunately, the majority of subsequent interpretations sideline discussions of Napoleon's politics in an attempt to clarify the exact nature of the emperor's personal character. As I elaborate below, these analyses often adopt one of four labels: military genius, charismatic opportunist, revolutionary ideologue, and realistic pragmatist. Each of these historiographical "camps" portrays the emperor's individual policies as a by-product of the aforementioned personality labels. While all of these descriptors are historically accurate assessments of Napoleon's political character, each group fails to provide a comprehensive explanation for the ideological contradictions between his domestic politics and revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality. In this respect, my work attempts to provide a unifying framework to explain the French leader's seeming contradictions in his personal and political character: Machiavelli's advice on the pursuit of power.

- Napoleon Bonaparte: Genius, Opportunist, Ideologue, or Pragmatist?

Building upon Stearns's "great man" approach, scholars have portrayed Napoleon's "military genius" on the battlefield as the primary catalyst for his political success. French scholars such as Thierry Lentz and Patrice Gueniffey often emphasize Napoleon's motives for conquest as a key point of reference for this view. They argued how the French leader "never wanted to destroy the monarchies of Europe" in his campaigns, but rather "subdue" them to negotiate for territory and influence from a position of strength.[28] Specifically, Gueniffey labeled

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[27] Ibid., 12-14.

[28] Thierry Lentz, *Nouvelle histoire du Premier Empire, tome II: L'effondrement du système napoléonien, 1810-1814* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 616-617; Philip G. Dwyer, "Review of *Total War or Traditional War*," *The International History Review* 31, no. 1 (2009): 78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40111056.

Napoleon's tempered use of repression in the domestic sphere as a reaction to his own brutality prior to the coup of 18 Brumaire (1799): "he no longer needed to show his strength, as the memory of Jaffa served to disarm many of his rivals and opponents."[29] In this context, Napoleon's "genius" stemmed from the use of military victory to inspire fear and make European populations subservient to his policies. By partial contrast, English historian Andrew Roberts attributed the emperor's political wisdom to his readings of Rousseau and Voltaire, seeking to reinvent the post-Brumaire French Republic "on logic and reason, which the Enlightenment philosophes saw as the only true foundations for authority."[30] That being said, he still acknowledges "unforeseen circumstances and major [military] miscalculations" such as the 1812 invasion of Russia, as the reason for Napoleon's downfall.[31] This "military genius" interpretation not only neglects Napoleon's political achievements altogether, but also fails to explain how he placated military rivals to his rule.

Scholarly analysis also portrays Napoleon as an ideologue, who used the French Revolution's ideals of liberty and equality to achieve power. On the surface, this approach allows historians to compare Napoleon's continuities and breaks with other revolutionaries. As scholar David Jordan described, classification of Napoleonic France as a military dictatorship is "only true in the narrowest possible sense" due to the emperor's attempts to isolate the military from domestic politics through a predominantly civilian bureaucracy.[32] He also emphasized similarities between the authoritarian "Bonapartist" ideology and radical Montagnards' attempts

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[29] For context, the incident referred to in this passage is the March 1799 "Siege of Jaffa" from Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign, in which French forces took control of the Ottoman-controlled city. The resulting mass rape and pillaging of the city's inhabitants is considered to be some of Napoleon's most infamous wartime atrocities. For details, see Patrice Gueniffey, *Bonaparte: 1769-1802* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2013), 420.

[30] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 29.

[31] Ibid., xliv-xlv.

[32] David Jordan, *Napoleon and the Revolution* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5.

to act as "theoreticians and agitators for unencumbered democracy" during Robespierre's terror.[33] However, this framework also contains a fundamental flaw: a false dichotomy labeling Napoleon's politics as either for or against the revolution's ideals. On one hand, historians such as Martin Lyons depicted Napoleon as the "heir and executor" of the revolution's core issues for maintaining republican ideals in his domestic reforms. Specific policies cited as evidence included guarantees for the freedom of religion and the redistribution of property to wealthy members of the Old Regime's Third Estate.[34] By contrast, Michael Broers and Isser Woloch argued how Napoleon's bureaucracy fundamentally betrayed the ideals of the revolution by eroding civil liberties such as freedom of the press and trial by jury to secure the dictator's rule.[35] Within the context of the larger Napoleonic Empire, Napoleon justified suppressing dissent as "saving" French client states from the chaos of the French Revolution. He also justified imperial conquests domestically as a "civilizing" mission designed to spread the revolution (or rather, Napoleon's bureaucratic institutions).[36] While Machiavelli's philosophies explain these ideological contradictions, this false dichotomy forces historians to limit the scope of their analysis by cherry-picking specific policies at the expense of others.

Alternatively, historians also view the emperor as an charismatic opportunist who used liberal reforms and military victories as tools to cultivate his image as "great" and powerful. Scholars of this paradigm dismiss all pretense that Napoleon had been motivated by ideology, but reframe his "superhuman" qualities and actions as opportunities for obtaining and maintaining power. For example, David Bell argues how the French leader's dependence on

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[33] Ibid., 7-8.
[34] Martyn Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1994), 111.
[35] Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship*, xiv-xv.
[36] Michael Broers, *The Napoleonic Mediterranean : Enlightenment, Revolution and Empire*, 1st ed. (London, England: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2019), 41.

"personal charisma and military glory" to achieve dictatorial power in the civil sphere prevented him from obtaining "legitimacy [from] the revolutionary principles of popular sovereignty and civic equality."[37] In his work *Men on Horseback*, he argues how Napoleon and four contemporary leaders (Pasquale Paoli, George Washington, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and Símon Bolivar) fashioned their images as "charismatic strongmen" to consolidate power as "saviors" of their respective revolutions.[38] In this context, the French leader ultimately hoped to secure his rule by politically fusing his charisma with a more stable institution (namely, his empire).[39] Phillip Dwyer and Alan Forrest emphasized Napoleon's various uses of propaganda to project his image as key opportunities to exert charisma among the French public. They argued how Napoleon contrasted the "stability" of his domestic rule with the "cruelty and treachery" of foreign nations "to popularize the war by painting [his] enemies in their darkest colors, and to provide justification for the greater censorship, harsh policing and repressive measures at home."[40] In particular, Dwyer took note of how Napoleon exaggerated his role in the Battle of Arcola (1796) in Antoine-Jean Gros's painting *Bonaparte at the Bridge of Arcola* to establish his personal "cult of the military hero."[41] While this framework offers a more comprehensive picture of Napoleon's personal and political character than the previous two camps, questions of how the emperor conceptualized his domestic policies, or what role Machiavelli may have played in that process, are not addressed.

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[37] David Avrom Bell, *Napoleon: A Concise Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), x.
[38] David Avrom Bell, *Men on Horseback: The Power of Charisma in the Age of Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2020), 16-17.
[39] This process, as defined by Max Weber, is called the "routinization of charisma," in which the authority inherent in the bond between a charismatic individual and his followers is transferred into a stable political institution to secure said individual's rule. For further details and examples of how this process played out in the age of revolution, see Ibid., 131-132.
[40] Alan Forrest, "Propaganda and the Legitimation of Power in Napoleonic France." *French History* 18, no. 4 (2004): 434-435.
[41] Philip Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 4-5.

The last "camp" of scholars describes Napoleon as a pragmatic realist who bent revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality to suit his policy needs and authoritarian tendencies. Following in the vein of the "opportunist" camp, subscribing historians emphasize Napoleon's ideological flexibility to be a product of his overarching pursuit of power. However, this approach differs in its focus on the "active" personal role Napoleon assumes in crafting policies, rather than the "passive" reactions to circumstances implied by the "opportunist" label. For example, Geoffrey Ellis characterized the French leader's reforms and public perception as dependent on a carefully orchestrated facade. To this end, he credited domestic policies such as his establishment of secondary schools (or *lycées*) as one of his regime's enduring legacies on account of their contributions to his mythological image as "'modern,' 'open to talents,' and 'meritocratic.'" Ellis also labeled Napoleon's bureaucratic administration as "an elaborate system of state centralism designed to serve as a projection of his personal power."[42] Steven Englund also emphasized how the larger "[French] Revolution determined his ideas decisively, in no way more than in intention to suppress the effects of France's explosive 'discovery of politics' in the eighteenth century." Unlike historians within the "ideologue" camp who label Napoleon's policies as a product of the revolution, he argued that the emperor's attempts to forge his own political path during this period made him stand apart as the figure who "ended" revolutionary politics. In other words, "democratic ideas" of the revolution and "pragmatic politics" both defined Napoleon's rule by their service to the goal seemingly instilled in him by Machiavelli: the pursuit of power.[43] In contrast to other interpretations' emphasis on individual aspects of the emperor's character, this view provides the most comprehensive picture of his

[42] Geoffrey Ellis, *Napoleon: Profiles in Power* (Routledge: Pearson Education Limited, 1997), 234-235.
[43] Frédéric Bluche, *Le bonapartisme: aux origines de la droite autoritaire, 1800-1850* (1980), quoted in Steven Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 472-473.

personal and political temperament. However, historians have yet to explain how Napoleon developed this power-centric approach to politics—a question to which Machiavelli's philosophies suggest an answer.

- Niccolò Machiavelli: Republican or Authoritarian?

While Napoleon was clearly a student of Machiavelli, scholars remain conflicted regarding which forms of government the Italian philosopher promoted. On one hand, Hilary Gatti labeled Machiavelli as the progenitor for republican ideals throughout the so-called "long sixteenth century" between 1500 and 1650, in contrast to his persisting reputation as an advocate of authoritarianism.[44] She argued that Machiavelli's theories of republicanism served as the basis for political and intellectual freedoms throughout Europe by indirectly encouraging reformers' pursuit of power to secure civil liberties.[45] Gatti's initial chapter "Political Liberty" highlighted the role of Machiavelli's experiences as a Florentine diplomat at the onset of the city-state's short-lived republican revolution from 1494 to 1512 in shaping the ideas of his *Discourses on Livy* and magnum opus *The Prince*. In her view, Machiavelli saw the return of the ruling Medici "prince," as a "historical given" due to "the failure of the city's republican government" to survive in a political climate favoring monarchy.[46] In lieu of Napoleon's childhood fascination with republican thinkers such as Rousseau, this interpretation partially explains the future emperor's interest in Machiavelli. However, this view fails to illustrate whether the Italian philosopher influenced or inspired the emperor's authoritarian politics in any way.

[44] Gatti, *Ideas of Liberty in Early Modern Europe*, 173.
[45] Ibid., 28.
[46] Ibid., 13-14.

While perceptions of Machiavelli as authoritarian could be inferred from his acceptance of Medici rule, scholars still contest the extent of authoritarianism within his ideas. In partial contrast with Gatti, Maurizio Viroli criticized interpretations of Machiavelli's philosophy as pro-republican to be a fundamental misunderstanding of his work. However, he also dismissed contemporary scholars' views of Machiavelli as a "teacher of evil," due to overemphasis on the philosopher's idea that ends justified the means no matter how amoral.[47] Instead, he argued that the core purpose of *The Prince* stemmed from its twenty-sixth chapter "An Exhortation to Liberate Italy from the Barbarians" and its advocacy of a so-called "redeemer" (namely, an ideal ruler who would secure civil liberties and unify the Italian nation).[48] Hannah Arendt's essay *On Revolution* previously made this point to explain the philosophical justifications underpinning socio-political upheavals in America and France throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She described Machiavelli as the "the spiritual father of revolution in the modern sense" for instilling "conscious and passionate yearning to revive the spirit and the institution of Roman antiquity which later became so characteristic of the political thought of the eighteenth century."[49] In the context of the French Revolution, this "spirit" stemmed from a desire for republicanism amidst the backdrop of tyrannical monarchy. In Napoleon's case, Machiavelli's advocacy of republican revolution and lack of a clear moral guide towards achieving this aim would have suited the emperor's authoritarian politics. This "authoritarian" interpretation also explains why the "ideologue" camp of Napoleonic scholars sometimes portrays the emperor as a "redeemer" of French liberty and equality—he crafted policies around the revolution's ideals to achieve power.

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[47] Maurizio Viroli, *Redeeming "The Prince": The Meaning of Machiavelli's Masterpiece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 1.
[48] Ibid., 15.
[49] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 30.

Alternatively, subsequent scholars of the "authoritarian" camp implied Napoleon's politics to be a surface-level application of Machiavelli's ideas akin to Montagnard actions during Robespierre's terror. For one, utopian philosophy scholar George Klosko examines Machiavelli's doctrines with regards to his concept of "educational realism," the idea that "moral reform" requires extensive education and extensive political control to make the spread of utopian ideals possible. Utilizing the radical Montagnards as a comparative case study, Klosko argued the moral reform (or "republic of virtue") desired by Robespierre could only be established by persuasion or political suppression he explicitly sought to avoid - a tactic Machiavelli deemed necessary (albeit morally evil) to ensure the collective good.[50] Dan Edlestein built upon Klosko's philosophical premise in his analysis of the "radical hostility" doctrine used as the ideological justification for Robespierre's terror. According to Edelstein, Montagnards formed a more radical form of republican government based on the defense of natural rights (life, liberty, and property) on the premise that "whoever violated the laws of nature could be killed with impunity." Using the principle of "ends justifying the means" attributed to Machiavelli, he argued that this assumption allowed the Committee of Public Safety to declare "any potentially subversive activity" as an offense that could be prosecuted as a "crime against nature."[51] Ultimately, the author attributed the Napoleonic regime's suppression of political dissidents as following a similar logic to the Montagnards' surface level application of Machiavelli's ideas: the "ends" of safeguarding the revolution justified the means of suppressing political opponents.[52] However, these "authoritarian" interpretations of Machiavelli

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[50] George Klosko, *Jacobins and Utopians: the Political Theory of Fundamental Moral Reform* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 77-78.
[51] Dan Edelstein, *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult of Nature, and the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 3-4.
[52] Ibid., 263.

and his works fail to clarify one key element: how Napoleon's political education and domestic policies had been shaped by the Italian philosopher's ideas.

I.2 Concerning My Argument on the Titular "Prince of the Revolution"

Building on conceptions of the French leader as a pragmatist, this work argues that Machiavelli's philosophies shaped Napoleon's political character and domestic reforms by legitimizing his dictatorial tactics as necessary tools to establish stable institutions. This analysis investigates the period between Napoleon's education at Brienne-le Château military academy in 1779 until his coronation as emperor in 1804. In doing so, I chronicle how Machiavelli's philosophies shaped Napoleon's political views and reforms in four key areas of French society he perceived to be unstable from the revolution: religion, education, property rights, and gender roles. Each chapter of this work shall provide a chronological narrative to illustrate the gradual influence Machiavelli's works had on Napoleon's politics and rule over time.

Chapter 1 centers on Napoleon's upbringing, experiences, and political education from his time at Brienne-le Château in 1779 to his seizure of power in the coup of 18 Brumaire (1799). Here, I trace Napoleon's exposure to the philosopher's works by analyzing his hero worship of Corsican nationalist leader (and alleged student of Machiavelli) Pasquale Paoli. I also analyze the emperor's notes on Machiavelli's *History of Florence* from 1789, which have been previously overlooked by scholars, to showcase how the philosopher shaped Napoleon's initial conceptions of the revolution's republican ideals. In doing so, I explain how the philosopher's ideas refined Napoleon's politics to be more pragmatic and opportunistic in place of the ideological dogmatism instilled in him by Paoli and French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

I conclude by discussing how Napoleon's desire to live up to the "glorious strongman" ideal left over from his youth prompted his experimentation with statecraft using *The Prince*.

Chapter 2 will build upon this foundation by examining the domestic reforms to the French state during the Consulate period (1800-1804) as a broader case study for Napoleon's application of Machiavelli's philosophies. To do so, I engage in a comparative analysis of *The Prince* in conjunction with three pieces of Bonapartist legislation: the Concordat of 1801 with Pope Pius VII, the Law of 11 Floréal (1802) on French education, and the Napoleonic Code of 1804. Concurrently, I examine Napoleon's personal correspondence with his wife Josephine, his brother Joseph, and the memoirs of advisors such as the Comte Molé among others to showcase his political views and justifications for these policies. In doing so, I clearly illustrate how his domestic reforms to the French state and the reasons he gave to justify them reflected Machiavelli's specific recommendations on acquiring dictatorial power.

I highlight this philosophical influence for a few reasons. For one, these doctrines explain the seeming contradictions between the emperor's progressive and conservative social policies: these were necessities that "secured the revolution" (or rather, the power of Napoleon himself). Second, this influence underscores how Napoleon cultivated his political image by performing the "exorbitant deeds" deemed necessary by Machiavelli to maintain power. Finally, the First Consul's "exorbitant" reforms also account for the Napoleonic government's relative political stability when compared to prior revolutionary regimes such as the Committee of Public Safety (June 1793 - July 1794) and the Directory (1795-1799).

By conducting this analysis, I shall be able to explain how Napoleon developed effective domestic policies regardless of their alignment with revolutionary ideals. By doing so, I ground Napoleon's success as a political actor within his unique political education rather than

propagandized images depicting the emperor as a glorious and powerful leader. While labels such as “opportunist” and “pragmatist” effectively illustrate the contradictions between Bonapartism and French revolutionary politics, they fail to explain why these tensions exist to begin with. By considering the influences of Machiavelli on his political character, I illustrate why Napoleon succeeded where prior revolutionary regimes failed.

I.3 A Brief Note Regarding Names, Dates, Stylization, and Misconceptions

Throughout different periods of his life, Napoleon Bonaparte had been known by various distinct names and titles. For example, he referred to himself by his Corsican birth name “Napoleone di Buonaparte” from his birth in 1769 until his family’s francization of the name to “Bonaparte” in 1793. In this work, I shall refer to him as “Napoleon Bonaparte” in accordance with English academic convention, and will apply this principle to members of his family. The one exception to this rule is when primary sources utilize the alternate “Buonaparte” spelling. When referencing Napoleon in the abstract, I will substitute his name with whatever title he used at any given moment in his career. To this end, descriptors such as “Corsican” or “general” will be used when referencing Napoleon during the pre-Brumaire years (1793-1799), whereas “First Consul” will be used when discussing his domestic reforms during the Consulate (1800-1804).

Furthermore, dates shall be provided in accordance with English academic convention, listing the day, month, and year in which they fall on the Gregorian calendar. In cases where a specific day or month is absent, whatever date information is available within primary sources shall be provided. Specific events will be referred to by their classifications among historians, with the Gregorian date provided where applicable. For example, despite occurring on November 9, 1799, Napoleon’s coup d’etat against the Directory is often referred to as “18 Brumaire” by

historians. This label is the result of a French revolutionary calendar introduced by the Montagnards in September 1793 to replace its Gregorian counterpart. While Napoleon restored the original calendar in 1806, revolutionary months such as "Brumaire," "Fructidor," and "Vendémiaire" are used by historians to refer to the events (in this case, coup attempts) that occurred within them.[53] As a result, I primarily use historians' labels to refer to the events themselves, but I also include their Gregorian date where necessary for chronological clarity.

With the lone exception of the following discussion, this work never refers to Napoleon as a "Machiavellian" when discussing his personal or political character. In both contexts, this term is a fundamentally flawed description of his character. For one, the term "Machiavellian" in the political sense refers to "the view that politics is amoral and that ordinarily unscrupulous actions involving deceit, treachery, and violence are thus permissible" to use when pursuing power.[54] This definition not only conflates Napoleon's ambitious nature with a "scheming mastermind" persona reminiscent of Frank Underwood from *House of Cards*, but is also condemned by Machiavelli as a potential cause for a ruler's downfall. In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "Concerning Those Who Have Obtained a Principality Through Wickedness," he emphasizes the need to have allies within a state's political establishment because:

> "[princes] will be able to reassure them, and win them to himself by benefits . . . He who does otherwise . . .is always compelled to keep the knife in his hand . . . owing to their continued and repeated wrongs."[55]

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[53] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 365-366.
[54] Colón, Suzan. "Machiavellianism." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed February 27, 2024, http://www.britannica.com/science/Machiavellianism.
[55] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, trans. Wayne A. Rebhorn (1513; reprint, New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003), 39.

Given his reliance on other French revolutionaries for his exploits, such as his partnership with Emmanuel Joseph Sieyes to stage the coup of 18 Brumaire, Napoleon was not "Machiavellian" in this sense.

Second, psychological definitions of "Machiavellian" refer to individuals predisposed towards "interpersonal manipulation, indifference to morality, lack of empathy, and a strategic focus on self-interest."[56] Like the first, this definition assumes Napoleon as being sociopathic in nature, which his correspondences with family explicitly contradict. "Not a day goes by without my loving you" Napoleon wrote to his wife Josephine following their separation in 1796, "not a night but I hold you in my arms."[57] Similarly, his correspondence with his brother Joseph also reveals a man preoccupied with a sense of duty and morality with regards to the chaotic state of France during the Revolution. As one letter written to Joseph in August 1795 described,

> "Personally, I hardly care what happens to me. I watch life almost indifferently. My permanent state of mind is that of a soldier on the field of battle . . . Everything disposes me to face my destiny without flinching . . . As a reasonable man I am sometimes astonished at this attitude; but it is a natural tendency produced in me by the moral state of this country. . . ."[58]

Here, Napoleon exhibits a solemn nonchalance and confidence in his abilities as a general of France and a need to act on his abilities in the interest of the country's "moral" state. In doing so, he reveals his preoccupation with morality in stark contrast to any character assumptions made by the "Machiavellian" label.

As a result, this work examines Napoleon as an individual "influenced by Machiavelli" in his thoughts and actions. I examine this influence using the following analysis questions as a

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[56] Colón, Suzan. "Machiavellianism." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed February 27, 2024, http://www.britannica.com/science/Machiavellianism.
[57] Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine de Beauharnais, 31 March 1796, quoted in Napoleon I, and James Maurice Thompson, *Letters of Napoleon* (Redditch, Worcestershire: Read Books Limited, 2013), 59.
[58] Napoleon Bonaparte to Joseph Bonaparte, 12 August 1795, quoted in Ibid., 53.

framework: Has the examined individual read Machiavelli's published works? Is this supported by primary evidence? Are an individual's ideas, actions, and or policies in line (directly or indirectly) with Machiavelli's word-for-word recommendations on how to acquire power? How are they similar/different? Using this framework, my analysis effectively discerns the extent and significance of Napoleon's reading of Machiavelli in two ways. First, I can isolate the influences of specific works such as *The Prince* from the emperor's other philosophical inspirations. Second, these criteria remove any assumptions caused by the label of "Machiavellian," allowing me to examine how the philosopher's ideals are implemented within the Napoleonic regime.

Lastly, this analysis is not attempting to argue that Machiavelli's works were the sole source of Napoleon's political thought. As the emperor read various classical texts and Enlightenment works, several other authors contributed to his politics—Montesquieu, Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes, Voltaire, Plutarch, Livy, Cicero, and Diderot, just to name a few.[59] Some of these thinkers also took inspiration from or had similar ideas to Machiavelli in their own works. As a result, Machiavelli's ideas have become diluted within Enlightenment discourse as an intellectual aether, in which readers (including Napoleon) indirectly absorbed his ideas from the aforementioned thinkers rather than his original texts. The emperor's inclusion of *The Discourses on Livy* in his personal library in 1808 implies that he may have included other works written by Machiavelli at various, undefined points.[60] However, the lack of direct evidence concerning when Napoleon owned and read *The Prince* (if at all) suggests that the emperor indirectly drew upon Machiavelli's ideas from the aforementioned aether via intellectual osmosis. As a result, my work examines overlooked places where the ideas of this text most

[59] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 12-13.
[60] Hicks, "Napoleon as a Politician," in Broers, et al., eds., *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture. War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850,* 76.

directly overlapped with and contributed to the French leader's political thinking. By doing so, I intend to provide a unifying analytical framework for Napoleon's politics that no other philosopher besides Machiavelli can do individually.

CHAPTER 1: HOW CORSICANS CONDUCTED THEMSELVES TO ACHIEVE GLORY AND POWER

In the years leading up to his seizure of power in 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte embarked on a series of military campaigns designed to bolster his power and prestige among the French people. During his Italian campaign circa 1797, he remarked how "the nation needs a leader, a leader decked in glory, and not in the theories of government, phrases, and speeches."[61] "The ambition came to me . . . of executing the great things which so far had been occupying my thoughts only as a fantastic dream,"[62] he said, "do you imagine that I will triumph in Italy in order to aggrandize the lawyers of the Directory?"[63] In other words, Napoleon portrayed his string of military victories as evidence of his personal "glory" and superior leadership compared to the ruling government. Machiavelli's philosophies formed the basis for this conceptualization of politics: leaders must tailor their image and actions to achieve their ultimate goal—the pursuit of power. However, this insight also begs the question: How did Machiavelli's philosophies shape Napoleon's politics over time?

Historians have long considered how Napoleon's early political education shaped his rise to power, yet few have explored how the emperor encountered Machiavelli's works. Philosophy scholar Frank George Healey cited the Corsican nationalist leader (and Napoleon's childhood hero) Pasquale Paoli as a key source of inspiration for Napoleon's political thought, stating how he supposedly "read daily from the works of Machiavelli."[64] He also pointed to Napoleon's notes on Machiavelli's *History of Florence* while researching Corsica as evidence that Paoli inspired

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[61] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in André-Francois Miot de Melito, *Mémoires du comte Miot de Melito*, 2 vols. (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1873-1874), 1:154.
[62] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Bell, *Men on Horseback*, 118.
[63] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Melito, *Mémoires du comte Miot de Melito*, 1:154.
[64] Frank George Healey, *The Literary Culture of Napoléon* (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1959), 32.

Napoleon's familiarity with the Italian philosopher to begin with. Using a comparative analysis, Peter Hicks contrasted the influences of Rousseau and Machiavelli as the basis for Napoleon's idealism and pragmatism respectively. However, he fails to elaborate on how Machiavelli impacted Napoleon's early political thought beyond regurgitating Healey's points on the matter nearly word-for-word.[65] Ruth Scurr also credited Napoleon's childhood fondness for Rousseau as the inspiration for his overlooked fascination with gardening. In particular, she argued how the emperor's reading of the philosopher's work *La Nouvelle Héloïse* at age nine inspired his preference for secluded "green spaces" he could use to escape bullying by French classmates (and later in life, to hold secret meetings).[66] Unfortunately, Scurr offered no explanation of the emperor's relationship with Machiavelli's philosophies beyond the encounter with Antonio Canova previously described.

Between his birth in 1769 and his seizure of power in November 1799, Napoleon's first encounters with Machiavelli's ideas stemmed from his experiences on Corsica and during the French Revolution. Initially, his childhood reverence of Corsican leader Pasquale Paoli sparked a passionate patriotism for his homeland. However, Napoleon also developed an underlying fascination with Machiavelli after learning of his hero reading of *The Prince* while researching histories of Corsica between 1786 and 1790. During this period, Napoleon also made notes on Machiavelli's *The History of Florence* in 1789, which detailed the titular Italian city-state's medieval power struggles. In particular, passages discussing Florence's attempt to establish constitutional government provided a supplementary source for the ideals of republicanism Napoleon inherited from his fascinations with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Roman Empire.

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[65] Hicks, "Napoleon as a Politician," in Broers, et al., eds., *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture. War, Culture and Society, 1750–1850* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 71.
[66] Scurr, *Napoleon: A Life Told in Gardens and Shadows*, 15.

Finally, Napoleon's falling out with Paoli and disillusionment with the Directory regime (1795-1799) prompted his use of ideas reminiscent of *The Prince* to establish French puppet governments in conquered Italian states. Napoleon also bolstered his military "glory" in the process to prove himself superior to the ruling government prior to his coup of 18 Brumaire.

In this chapter, I argue that Napoleon's political thought gradually incorporated ideas reminiscent of Machiavelli's philosophies as they became useful to his pursuit of power throughout the French Revolution. Through a textual analysis of Napoleon's personal writings, I determine that the emperor's disillusionment with his childhood ideals stemmed from his use of ideas within the intellectual aether of Machiavelli's philosophies to navigate the political disarray around him. This philosophical influence explains the underlying metanarrative of "power" and "glory" attributed to his leadership: he cultivated this image to portray himself as the "savior of France" in contrast to the shortcomings of his contemporaries. These philosophies also provide an explanation for the development of Napoleon's personal ambition and his disdain for prior revolutionary regimes such as the Directory (1795-1799).

1.1 Early Influences: Pasquale Paoli, Corsican Patriotism, and the Abbé de Germanes

To understand how Machiavelli's works became integrated into Napoleon's early political thought, we must first examine the childhood inspirations for his outlook on French society. Prior to Napoleon's birth in 1769, turbulent struggles for sovereignty in his native homeland of Corsica formed the environment in which he later developed a fierce, nationalistic fervor. Beginning in 1729, the island initiated a decades-long war for independence from its centuries-long subjugation by the Republic of Genoa, eventually resulting in the formation of a nationalist republic in 1755 led by Pasquale Paoli and his trusted secretary Carlo Bonaparte.

Aiming to model his government on the principles of enlightened republicanism, Paoli established Corsica's first state newspaper and national university in the island's capital Corte.[67] As Anglo-Scottish observer James Boswell recalled when visiting the island in 1765, Paoli presented himself as an enlightened ruler intent on making Corsica into a self-sufficient power:

> "His great object was to form the Corsican in such a manner that they might have a firm constitution and might be able to subsist without him. 'Our state,' said he, 'is young and still requires the leading strings. I am desirous that the Corsicans should be taught to walk themselves.'"[68]

Unfortunately, Corsican nationalists' hopes for independence would be quashed by Genoa's ceding of the island to French King Louis XV, whose subsequent military occupation resulted in the island's annexation into France in 1768.[69] Anti-French guerrilla fighting continued until Corsican forces suffered their final defeat at the Battle of Ponte Nuovo in May 1769. As a result, Paoli fled the island in June for exile in London, while Carlo submitted to French rule to secure his family's noble status just before Napoleon's birth two months later.

Between Napoleon's birth in August 1769 and his departure for France in 1779, Carlo instilled stories of his support for the Corsican cause to his son. Prior to their people's final defeat at Ponte Nuovo, an anonymous inspirational speech encouraging guerrilla fighters to continue the fight for the Corsican cause became the centerpiece of the Bonaparte family legend:

> "If it be written in the book of destiny that the greatest monarch on earth [King Louis XV] shall take this measure in battle with the smallest people on earth [Corsicans], than we have reason to be proud, and we are certain to live and die with glory . . . we fight as men with no hope who are yet resolved to win or die."[70]

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[67] Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 5.
[68] James Boswell, quoted in Ibid., 6.
[69] Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 19.
[70] Antoine-Marie Graziani, *Pascal Paoli: Père de la patrie corse* (Paris: Tallandier, 2002), 23.

Internally, the family attributed the speech to the then-twenty-two year-old Carlo as evidence of their family's role in the war for independence. However, present-day scholars such as Steven Englund have since suggested that it was more likely that Paoli himself delivered the address. Nevertheless, Napoleon recalled in his exile on St. Helena how the excerpt moved him as a child:

> "If, to be free, it were only enough to desire freedom, then all people would be free. But history shows that few receive the benefits of freedom because few have the energy, courage, or virtue it takes."[71]

In spite of his father's collaboration with King Louis XV and his own French citizenship from birth, this speech instilled the young Napoleon with a sense of Corsican patriotism that initially dominated his political thought.

The harsh physical and social environment Napoleon experienced while attending the Brienne-le Château military academy as of May 1779 also played a crucial role in developing the future emperor's Corsican patriotism. Upon entering at age eight or nine, students (primarily of minor French or Corsican nobility) were required to stay in residence throughout the duration of their six-year education, during which they could not leave the institution or return home under most circumstances. The three exceptions to this rule included "great walks" permitted during a two-week holiday break beginning on September 15th, cases where students fell ill and needed "country air" to lift their spirits, or if parents requested their child's removal from the academy entirely.[72] Minimalistic living conditions also served to instill discipline by forcing attendees to rely solely on materials the academy provided. In a relatively small school of only 110, boys were provided a "cell" less than two square meters in size. These rooms housed only four items for the occupant's use: a water jug, a basin, and a single straw mattress coupled with a complementary blanket. As these rooms were meant to be used only for sleeping, students would

[71] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 7.
[72] Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 27.

be locked in their rooms from sunset to sunrise, while additional provisions would only be provided if a student exhibited extreme frailty. Believing that corporal punishment "deranged the health, harmed the spirit, and corrupted the character," instructors penalized disobedience solely by depriving students of social interaction with other classmates. Later on St. Helena, Napoleon described these experiences as follows: "I was the poorest of my mates . . . they had pocket money, I never did. But I was proud and I made every effort to see to it that nobody noticed. . . . I never learned to laugh and play like the others."[73] Through these methods, instructors at Brienne molded Napoleon into an individual who could handle the hardships of military service.

Brienne's curriculum also provided Napoleon with a rigid daily schedule designed to supplement its discipline tactics. From six to eight in the morning, students were given the chance to use the bathroom, pray, have breakfast, and read about the laws of the state or proper aristocratic manners. From eight to ten-o-clock, classes centered on a combination of mathematics and physics to supply knowledge of artillery, while supplying history, Latin, and geography to provide case studies on military tactics and their applications. In turn, the drawing of fortresses, maps, and landscapes from ten to noon provided additional means for cadets to test their skills. As the school's motto explained its choice in subjects, "history could become for a young man the school of morality and virtue." To this end, Brienne supplied Napoleon and his classmates with ancient histories such as the writings of the Roman scholar Plutarch, which depicted the tactics and deeds of generals such as Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. After a two-hour lunch break, students resumed their studies of math, physics, Latin, history, and geography between two and four in the afternoon.[74] From four to eight at night, two chosen electives—namely weapons, dancing, music, study and writing—occupied pupils' time, with

[73] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 20.
[74] Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 28.

dinner and recreation following until bedtime at ten.[75] This strict regimen, coupled with limited free time, caused Napoleon to become somewhat of a loner among his peers. However, the experiences also instilled him with two core passions: the "glory" and "power" surrounding the generals in his history lessons and the artillery tactics he used throughout his military career.

Upon transferring to the Parisian *Ecole militaire* in October 1784, Napoleon struggled to assimilate to his surroundings due to continental schoolmates' mockery of his Corsican roots. Even before Napoleon's arrival, French prejudices towards Corsica and its inhabitants were not uncommon. As one anonymous officer described his time on the island between 1774 and 1777, Corsicans were "the most vicious and the most corrupt [people] that exist on the planet."[76] As a result, Napoleon poured himself into studying the history of his native homeland. In a letter to his father Carlo dated around October 1784, Napoleon requested the family's copy of James Boswell's *An Account of Corsica* (1768) among other histories of his homeland:

> "Please send me Boswel (Histoire de Corse) with other stories or memoirs about this kingdom. You have nothing to fear; I will take care of them and bring them back to Corsica with me when I come there, even if it is six years from now."[77]

Following Carlo's death two years later, Napoleon periodically returned to Corsica over the next five years to assist with his family's financial affairs. By the time he graduated from the *Ecole militaire* in 1785, Napoleon's patriotic interest in his homeland dominated his reading as a source of political thought and pride against French prejudices.

From 1785 onwards, Boswell's *An Account of Corsica* gave Napoleon a focal point for his patriotic political thought: the exploits of Pasquale Paoli. First published in English circa

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[75] Ibid., 29.
[76] V. de Carrafa, *Mémoires Historiques sur la Corse par un officier du régiment de Picardie, 1774-1777*, 1889, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 21.
[77] Napoléon Bonaparte to Carlo Bonaparte, 1784, in Napoléon Bonaparte, Frédéric Masson, and Guido Biagi, *Napoléon Inconnu, papiers inédits (1786-1793)* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1895), 1:82-83.

1768, the narrative detailed its author's first meeting with the Corsican leader, whom he described as "tall, strong, [and] well-made."[78] The future emperor had no intimate connection with Paoli due to the Corsican leader's exile to London in June 1769. Moreover, there is no primary evidence that Napoleon wrote to his hero prior to a letter of introduction he sent to Paoli in 1789. That being said, it is important to note the impact Boswell's book had on Paoli's reputation outside of Corsica. Throughout the late 1760s and early 1770s, *An Account of Corsica* generated a mass interest in the Corsican leader among British audiences. As a result, various poems centered on the independence fighter, such as George Cockings's *The Paoliad*, soon appeared in English newspapers mere months after the publication of Boswell's book.[79] Anna Barbauld's 1773 collection *Poems* called Poali "the godlike man who saved his country." Timothy Scribble even praised the Corsican leader by name in his work, stating how "brave PAOLI [strove] to free mankind!"[80] As historian David Bell argued, "this broader reputation, even if short-lived, demonstrated the power of print fervently to attach a far-flung set of admirers to a previously unknown charismatic figure."[81] Among Paoli's "far-flung" admirers was the young Napoleon, who quickly came to revere the Corsican leader as an idolized hero.

Napoleon's reading of *An Account of Corsica* circa 1785 quickly sparked the future emperor's attachment to Paoli. Describing the Corsican independence fighter's unique qualities in propagandized terms, Boswell writes how Paoli "guided the Corsicans to glory" through his masterly knowledge of human nature."[82] In doing so, he emphasized the importance of Paoli's

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[78] James Boswell, quoted in Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 17.
[79] Bell, *Men on Horseback*, 23.
[80] Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Poems* (London, Joseph Johnson, 1773), 11; Timothy Scribble, *The Weeds of Parnassus, a Collection of Original Poems* (Rochester: T. Fisher, 1774), 11.
[81] Bell, *Men on Horseback*, 27.
[82] Ibid., 162.

personal charisma in continuing the Corsican independence struggle that Napoleon had already come to admire. Boswell later reflects on his personal meeting with Paoli:

> "I took leave of Paoli with regret and agitation, not without some hopes of seeing him again. From having known intimately so exalted a character, my sentiments of human nature were raised, while, by a sort of contagion, . . . for where shall I find a man greater than Paoli?"[83]

On the surface, Napoleon developed an aggrandized perception of Paoli as a champion of Corsican liberty against French tyranny. However, these exaggerated descriptions of Paoli also provided the future emperor with a "glorious strongman" archetype that he could model himself on. Within the context of Napoleon's political thought, this concept combined Boswell's notion of Paoli as a "charismatic strongman" with the idea that power could only be obtained through military victory, much like generals of classical antiquity. In other words, Napoleon viewed Paoli and the cause of Corsican patriotism as a means to emulate the "glory" of leaders from his history lessons at Brienne, such as Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great.

Ultimately, Napoleon's attachment to Paoli and Corsica culminated in a series of unpublished *Lettres de la Corse* that formed the bedrock of his "glorious strongman" ideal and patriotic fervor. Written between 1786 and 1791, Napoleon intended to present the letters to his idol as both a gift and a demonstration of his commitment to the Corsican cause. As he declared in a letter of introduction to Paoli from June 1789, "I was born as the fatherland was dying . . . Thirty-thousand Frenchmen . . . drowning the seat of liberty in the torrents of blood: this was the spectacle that first impressed itself upon my sight."[84] The work described "the history of Corsica [as] . . . one Perpetual struggle between a small people who want to live free and his neighbors

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[83] James Boswell, *An Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to that Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* (Glasgow: Edward Dilly & Charles Dilly, 1768), 372.
[84] Napoleon Bonaparte to Pasquale Paoli, 12 June 1789, in *Correspondance générale de Napoléon*, ed. Thierry Lentz (Paris: Fayard, 2004–2018), 1:96.

who want to oppress him."[85] Napoleon lamented the hypocrisy of France's revolutionary leaders for failing to grant his people independence:

> "Corsica sees its days withered by the greed, the whim, the suspicion and the ignorance of those who, in the name of the king, dispose of the public forces. Alas! how could this enlightened [French] nation not be touched by our state! How could it not be moved to redress the wrongs done to us in its name! This was the main fruit I wanted to draw from my work"[86]

Here, Napoleon emphasizes Corsicans' continued struggles as a byproduct of a foreign "yoke" first imposed by the Genoese and followed by the French. Between appeals to his own patriotic zeal, Napoleon also pays tribute to his hero's deeds as a "savior" of Corsica, whose "glory" and power provide the foundations for an independent republic:

> "I will have to speak of [Monsieur] Paoli, whose wise institutions assured our happiness for a moment, and led us to conceive such brilliant hopes. . . . His resources, his firmness, his eloquence will be admired; in the midst of civil and foreign wars, he faced up to everything. With a firm arm, he laid the foundations of the Constitution, and made our tyrants tremble even in Genoa."[87]

Here, Napoleon underscored his fascination with the "glorious strongman" ideal he perceived in Paoli's character: a strong and purposeful leader whose "resources" "firmness," and "elegance" could ensure his people's prosperity.

In addition to exemplifying Napoleon's "glorious strongman" ideal, Paoli's reading of Machiavelli's *The Prince* introduced the future emperor to the philosopher's works. While composing his *Lettres de la Corse* for Paoli, Napoleon studied and made notes on various histories of Corsica as references for his work. As one letter to Swiss bookseller Paul Borde in July 1786 revealed, he had requested the Abbé de Germanes's *Histoire des révolutions de Corse*

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[85] Napoléon Bonaparte, Frédéric Masson, and Guido Biagi. *Napoléon, manuscrits inédits, 1786-1791: publiés d'après les originaux autographes* (Paris: Société d'éditions Littéraires et Artistiques, 1908), 395.
[86] Ibid., 396-397.
[87] Ibid.

and any books on his homeland that the bookseller "could get hold of . . . quickly."[88] Published in 1776, Germanes's work depicted Paoli's fight for independence from the perspective of French forces sent to garrison the island. In one passage discussing the suppression of Corsican rebels, Germanes identified Machiavelli as the source of the Corsican leader's politics:

> "General Paoli's palace aroused curiosity and provoked reflection. Machiavelli's *Prince* was found on a bedside table, [open to] the chapter most favorable to despots."[89]

What this work does not specify is which passage of *The Prince* "most favorable to despots" Germanes is referring to, making any evidence that Machiavelli shaped Pasquale Paoli's political character seem dubious at best. However, given Napoleon's existing admiration for the Corsican leader, this work exposed him to Machiavelli's ideas within *The Prince* as a means to follow in Paoli's philosophical footsteps.

For Napoleon, Germanes's references also illustrated how Machiavelli's philosophies could be used to shape a ruler's image through indirect comparisons between Paoli and French king Louis XV. As previously noted, the abbé implied that Poali had read Machiavelli's *The Prince* with the intention of becoming an oppressive dictator by reading an unnamed chapter "most favorable to despots."[90] By contrast, Germanes's subsequent passages imply Louis XV's "merciful" suppression of Corsican rebels to have been inspired by Machiavelli's work:

> "Already, a thousand different benefits are announcing the magnificence of the new Sovereign. No sooner had this august Prince taken possession of it, than he displayed his clemency and generosity. All the crimes known before the redemption of Corsica, . . . escaped punishment by the letters of abolition, and

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[88] Napoléon Bonaparte to Paul Borde, July 29, 1786, in Napoléon Bonaparte, Frédéric Masson, and Guido Biagi. *Napoléon Inconnu, papiers inédits (1769-1793)*, 138.
[89] Abbé de Germanes, *Histoire des révolutions de Corse, depuis ses premiers habitans jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Chez Demonville, Imprimeur-Libraire de l'Académie Françoise, 1776), 140.
[90] Ibid.

> faded into eternal oblivion. The graces lavished on several citizens planted the seeds of emulation and hope in hearts withered by oppression."[91]

Here, Germanes explicitly references a chapter of *The Prince* titled "On Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether it is Better to be Loved Than Feared," in which Machiavelli argues that "a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids hatred."[92] In doing so, Germanes attempted to sell French rule to the Corsican people by contrasting both leaders' application of Machiavelli's philosophies: Paoli's alleged tyranny and Louis XV's attempts to "win love" from the island's inhabitants. That being said, there is no other primary evidence that suggests that either ruler ever read Machiavelli's works, affirming that the clergyman's references are little more than pro-French propaganda. Nevertheless, Germanes's work portrayed *The Prince* as a guidebook for the young Napoleon to "win love" from his people and "out-Machiavelli" the French tyranny imposed on Corsica.

In summary, Pasquale Paoli instilled the young Napoleon Bonaparte with the ideological foundations of Corsican patriotism, the "glorious strongman" ideal, and an early exposure to the works of Machiavelli. In lieu of his troubled assimilation to French society following his homeland's annexation, Napoleon turned to the histories of his native Corsica to assert himself among his peers. Upon reading propagandized accounts of Paoli and the wars for independence, Napoleon came to revere the Corsican leader and the nationalist cause he represented, prompting him to advocate for Corsican interests in the early days of the French Revolution. In the process, he conceptualized a "glorious strongman" ideal based on his fascination with the "glory" of generals such as Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. While studying to complete his *Lettres sur la Corse*, he learned of his hero's adoption of Machiavelli's philosophies (albeit without

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[91] Abbé de Germanes, *Histoire des révolutions de Corse*, 152-153.
[92] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 72.

evidence) and their role in the French conquest of his homeland from the Abbé de Germanes's narrative. As I shall elaborate in the following section, this exposure marked the beginning of Napoleon's lifelong fascination with Machiavelli's philosophies: it formed an underlying desire for power to achieve Corsican independence (and later, the "glorious strongman" ideal) that Paoli instilled in him.

1.2 Republican Shadows: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Machiavelli's *History of Florence*

Between 1786 and 1792, Napoleon also developed a fascination with the works of Rousseau and Machiavelli's *History of Florence*. Napoleon's notes on the *History of Florence* are the only explicit primary evidence detailing his analysis of Machiavelli's philosophies prior to his seizure of power in 1799. Based on this timestamp, the edition of Machiavelli's work that Napoleon most likely read was the first French translation released in 1789 by Parisian publisher Monsieur de Barret. The notes themselves stem from a transcribed collection of Napoleon's unedited manuscripts dated between 1786 and 1791, comprising the histories of several countries (Britain, Arabia, Venice, and Switzerland to name a few) and his comments on the works of French philosophers such as Voltaire. Most striking, however, is the inclusion of the unfinished *Lettres de la Corse,* which Napoleon began composing for Paoli around the same time he took notes on *The History of Florence*. As a result, I infer that Napoleon had both Paoli and the early events of the French Revolution in mind when analyzing Machiavelli's work.

Initially, Napoleon focused on the Venetian diaspora in Machiavelli's *The History of Florence* as a reflection of his nationalist frustrations towards the French conquest of Corsica. For example, his notes discuss how "The people of Aquileia, fearing Attila, took refuge in the

small islands of the Veneto region, and Venice was born."[93] Here, Napoleon referenced the following passage from Machiavelli's work centered on Atilla the Hun and his unintentional creation of Venice when invading a weakened Roman Empire:

> "The Hunns . . . Not being able to force their way into France, which was at that time defended by the Barbarians, they fell into Italy under Attila their King, who not long before (to rid himself of a Partner in the Government) had slain Bleda his own Brother, and by that means made himself absolute. . . . Attila having in this manner made his inroad into Italy, he besieged Aquilegia, lay (without interruption) two years before it, wasted the Country round about it, and dispersed the Inhabitants, which (as we shall afterwards declare) was the occasion of building the City of Venice."[94]

In doing so, Napoleon highlights the role of Germanic "barbarians" in forming a sense of Venetian identity by forcibly expelling them from their initial homeland to create an Italian city-state to oppose said forces. Napoleon then offers his interpretation of this passage as follows: "Unhealthy countries are cleansed by the influx of people who settle there. They corrected the aridity of the soil by cultivation and the malignity of the air by fire. Venice and Pisa are proof of the above assertion."[95] For Corsican nationalists, the "unhealthy" France teetering on revolution at the time Napoleon was reading this work could be cleansed of its socio-economic problems by allowing Corsicans to "cultivate" French lands and "correct" the corruption of the Old Regime "by fire." Thus, Machiavelli's case study of Venice offered Napoleon a possible application for his patriotic sentiments: using his participation in the French Revolution to address the injustices against Corsica by the Bourbon monarchy.

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[93] Bonaparte, Masson, and Biagi. *Napoléon, manuscrits inédits, 1786-1791: publiés d'après les originaux autographes*, 499.
[94] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The History of Florence, from the Translation of the Works of the Famous Nicolas Machiavel Published in 1675*, ed. Henry Morley (1532; reprint, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1891), 38.
[95] Bonaparte, Masson, and Biagi. *Napoléon, manuscrits inédits, 1786-1791: publiés d'après les originaux autographes*, 499.

The other prominent influence to consider in Napoleon's reading of Machiavelli is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the famed French philosopher whose works inspired many of the ideas of liberty and equality espoused by revolutionaries in 1789. For Napoleon, Rousseau (or "J.J." as he would refer to him in the aforementioned manuscripts) provided a philosophical affirmation of his existing admiration of Corsica. Observing Paoli's wars of independence with keen interest, "J.J." dedicated his work *On the Social Contract* (1762) to Corsica: "I have a feeling that this little island will one day astonish Europe."[96] Similarly, his romantic novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), which Napoleon claimed to have read at age nine, argued that individuals should embrace their feelings regardless of social norms.[97] In both cases, Rousseau's writings spoke to Napoleon on a personal level: both men were outsiders in French society who saw Paoli's crusade as a template for addressing the social and political injustices of the Old Regime. However, one key attitude separated Napoleon from his inspiration: their views on the nature of human beings. Echoing Thomas Hobbes's belief that self-interest was humanity's driving motive, the young Corsican wrote how "the natural spirit of man is to dominate."[98] As a result, Rousseau's works informed Napoleon's initial conceptions of the state and religion between 1786 and 1792, but gradually became subservient to the authoritarian interpretations he read in Machiavelli's *The History of Florence*.

- Napoleon's Views on the State (1786-1792)

To characterize the role of the "state" in society, Rousseau often emphasized the authoritarian nature of the French monarchy as its most detrimental flaw. Throughout his work

[96] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 6.
[97] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 13.
[98] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 30.

On the Social Contract (1762), he argues how human beings had been created equal by God and possessed the natural right to freedom, with which individuals formed a "social contract" with their rulers designed to provide protection in exchange for civil liberties; this pact could in turn be broken should the ruler become tyrannical.[99] Within the context of monarchy, he noted how "an individual represents a collective being; so that a moral unity which constitutes the prince is at the same time a physical unity," in contrast to republics where collectives represented individuals.[100] According to Rousseau, this intertwinement of the "moral" attitudes of the monarch with the "physical" government of a country provides a very efficient regime because:

> "the will of the people and the will of the prince, the public force of the state and the individual power of the government, all respond to the same mover."[101]

Here, Rousseau conceptualizes the people and broader public as the "state," while the aforementioned intertwinement characterizes the monarch as a "government" in and of itself because the system revolves around a single individual. In turn, he notes how "[k]ings want to be absolute, and from afar men cry out to them that the best way of becoming absolute is to make themselves loved by their people." Using this logic, he argues how the policy of a monarchy "operates . . . to the disadvantage of the state [or people]" because the system is designed to serve the needs of the monarch (or "government") and "not the public happiness."[102]

Using Rousseau's language, Napoleon outlined his criticisms against the tyranny of the French monarchy in very similar terms. In an unfinished manuscript from 1788 titled *A Dissertation on Royal Authority*, Napoleon echoed Rousseau's refutations:

> "This work will begin with general ideas on the origin and growth of the name of king in the minds of men. Military government is favorable to it; this work will

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[99] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, trans. Maurice Cranston (1762; reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1968), 59-60.
[100] Ibid., 116.
[101] Ibid., 117.
[102] Ibid.

> then go into the details of the usurped authority enjoyed by kings in the twelve kingdoms of Europe."

Here, Napoleon parrots the philosopher's argument regarding how the tyrannical rule of Europe's monarchs usurped the people's natural freedom, arguing how "there are very few kings who would not have deserved to be dethroned."[103] In doing so, he based his conceptions of the state on a single key principle outlined by Rousseau: the need for rulers to serve the "public happiness" to ensure a functioning government.

Following the footsteps of his beloved "J.J.", Napoleon began to favor the republic as an ideal form of government. In an intellectual exercise assigned by the leader of his artillery regiment in 1788, Napoleon outlined these preferences in a draft constitution for the society of junior officers (dubbed "La Calotte"). In his preamble, he places Rousseau's social contract at the forefront by emphasizing a "primitive Pact" as the basis for his constitution's legitimacy.[104] The young Corsican then follows suit in Article I by declaring:

> "all are equal, all are motivated by the interests of the corps, all must have a deliberative voice. The date of certification, seniority of rank, puerile distinctions. All who share equally in danger must share equally in honors. This may, however, be subject to slight restrictions."[105]

Here, Napoleon highlights Rousseau's ideals of liberty and equality as the basis for his own political thought, albeit through a lens of strong leadership. For example, Article III of the mock constitution goes on to outline the powers of the "Chief" (or senior lieutenant) and the "Infallibles" (the Chief's subordinates and advisors). Here, Napoleon assigns the Chief the authority to convene assemblies and "the duty to ensure that the interests and respect of the people of France are maintained." He could only be ousted by a unanimous vote of all regiment

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[103] Bonaparte, Masson, and Biagi. *Napoléon, manuscrits inédits, 1786-1791: publiés d'après les originaux autographes*, 371.
[104] Ibid., 36.
[105] Ibid., 38.

members proposed by the Infallibles.[106] To do so, the young Corsican derived inspiration from Rousseau's understanding of monarchy, in which the Chief (or King) must make himself loved by their people via unanimous support. However, Napoleon's conception of republican government differed from his inspiration in one crucial aspect: taking the perspective of the state and its capacity to rule (regardless of the need to maintain ideals of liberty and equality) into consideration.

Upon consulting Machiavelli's work in 1789, Napoleon began to adopt an increasingly authoritarian approach to republicanism. In his notes on *The History of Florence*, Napoleon summarized the establishment of a Florentine republic in the thirteenth century following a brutal conflict between the city-state's Guelph and Ghibelline factions.[107] In accordance with Rousseau's point concerning the need to ensure the "public happiness," he took note of how "the two parties reconciled for the public good and gave Florence a completely new form of government." In subsequent paragraphs, he describes this new Florentine government:

> "The city was divided into six tribes, each of which had to elect two magistrates every year with the name of elders. Two foreigners were appointed to exercise both civil and criminal justice. One was given the title of captain of the people, the other that of podestat. There were 20 companies in the town and 76 in the district. All young people were enrolled, with orders to be at arms, each under his own banner, at the first order of the captain or elders."[108]

Here, Napoleon notices the striking similarities between the government described by Machiavelli and his own draft constitution from the year before: a strong, absolute authority (the

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[106] Ibid., 39-40.

[107] For context, the Investiture Controversy of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries centered on a power struggle between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor for political and religious hegemony in central Europe. As a result, Italian city-states such as Florence became divided between one of two factions: the papacy-supporting Guelphs, or the emperor-leaning Ghibellines and would frequently switch sides based on their personal interests. As a mercantile trading power, Florence offered support to the side that offered the lowest taxes for its goods, leading to frequent political instability and regime change as a result.

[108] Ibid., 500.

"Captain of the People") that all subordinates must rally to at a moment's notice to ensure civil and criminal justice. As a result, Machiavelli's *The History of Florence* offered confirmation for Napoleon's personal authoritarian views of the state beyond Rousseau's doctrines.

Machiavelli's example of the aforementioned Florentine republic also offered Napoleon guidance on how to ensure a state remained stable and long-lasting. Napoleon's notes continue with the following passage describing the collapse of the Florentine constitutional republic previously described:

> "This constitution lasted ten years, and Florence prospered . . .The Ghibellines, jealous of the preponderance held by the Guelphs, whom the people favored as more favorable to their independence, intrigued with Mainfroy, King of Naples; this having come to the attention of the Elders, . . . the indignant people took up arms and forced them to abandon Florence. The Ghibellines took refuge in Siena, begged for help from Mainfroy, who sent them an army with which they defeated the Guelphs, seized Florence and destroyed every trace of the old government."[109]

Here, Napoleon takes note of the Florentine government's relative stability as dependent upon the Guelph and Ghibelline factions' cooperation, which devolved into authoritarian rule once the latter began seeking allies to stage a takeover. Given Napoleon's observations of the government structure and its similarities to his own constitutional designs, I infer that he viewed singular, cohesive rule without the divisions described in this passage as essential to the stability of his imagined republic.

Moreover, Napoleon began to view the authoritarian statist ideas he cultivated from Machiavelli as an explanation for the foolishness he perceived among political elites in the National Assembly between 1790 and 1791. At this point, most deputies in the new government hoped to retain the monarchy, but with a considerably reduced authority compared with the absolutism of the Old Regime. In an unpublished commentary titled "Republic or Monarchy?"

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[109] Ibid., 501.

written in May 1791, he outlined the internal conflict he experienced between Rousseau's ideals and his own authoritarian interpretations as a result of these Assembly debates:

> "If an unprejudiced publicist could have doubts about the preference that should be given to republicanism or monarchism, I believe that today his doubts must be removed. Republicans are reviled, slandered and threatened... and then, for whatever reason, it is said that republicanism is impossible in France. In truth, monarchist orators have done much to bring about the fall of the monarchy, for after having run out of steam with vain analyses."[110]

Initially, Napoleon continues to regurgitate Rousseau's point concerning a monarchy's need to win the love of the people to maintain power in spite of its conflicting interests. However, in light of King Louis XVI's failure to declare his support for the new government, Napoleon immediately follows with his own statist interpretation reminiscent of his notes on the Florentine republic's collapse:

> "Without morals, there is no republic. A great nation needs a center of unity. Twenty-five million people cannot live in poverty. Republic is an impolitic adage."[111]

In other words, a republican government must be upheld by a unifying strongman figure (namely, a general or captain) to ensure the "morals" (or legitimacy and traditions) of the institutions are maintained. As if directly addressing the National Assembly and Machiavelli's examples of Florentine statebuilding, Napoleon concluded his conception of the authoritarian republic to be essential in securing a "center of unity" within France's revolutionary regime.

Napoleon's assessment of the monarchy and the need for unity proved especially poignant in the wake of King Louis XVI's failed attempts to reassert control over the country. Initially, Louis supported the Assembly's 1792 resolution to declare war on Austria in the hopes they would overthrow the revolutionaries for him and restore the absolute monarchy. "There is

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[110] Ibid., 521.
[111] Ibid., 522.

no way of restoring their authority except through force and foreign assistance," argued Marie Antoinette's go-between to the Swedish king.[112] However, as Austrian troops began to gain ground and close in on Paris, radical newspapers stoked fears that these forces would dissolve the National Assembly and restore the king to full power. Fearing for the safety of the revolution so long as the king remained on the throne, a Montagnard mob stormed the Tuileries Palace on August 10th, 1792 and killed several members of the king's Swiss guard.[113] In response, Louis and his family took refuge in the chamber of the Assembly, while its deputies moved within hours to suspend the monarchy entirely to calm public outcry.[114] Napoleon, who had been stationed in Paris at the time, critiqued the king's actions in a letter to his brother Joseph:

> "When you get right down to it . . . the crowd is hardly worth the great effort one takes to curry its favor . . . Those leading are poor examples of men , I have to say . . . If Louis XVI had climbed up on a horse, victory would have been his."[115]

Here, Napoleon expresses his disdain for the king's incompetence and inability to maintain power. He also infers that the factionalism within France could have been avoided if Louis XVI had "climbed up on a horse" to rally the country behind him rather than seeking foreign support (just as the Ghibellines did in medieval Florence) to overthrow the new government. By reading Machiavelli and applying examples from *The History of Florence* to his own circumstances, Napoleon developed a pragmatic approach to state politics and a distaste for violent mobs.

- Napoleon's Views on Religion (1786-1789)

Within the context of this statist approach to politics, Rousseau also offered Napoleon the blueprint for his views on religion. Throughout his work *On the Social Contract* (1762), he

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[112] Évelyne Lever, *Correspondance de Marie-Antoinette (1770-1793)* (Paris: Tallandier, 2005), 771.
[113] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 282-283.
[114] Ibid., 284.
[115] Napoleon Bonaparte to Joseph Bonaparte, August 1792, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 51.

described religion and politics as inexorably linked, stating how "each state, having its own faith and its own government, did not distinguish between its Gods and its laws," making political war "just as much theological war."[116] To this point, he argued how the ancient Romans served as a model society by "[letting] the vanquished keep their own Gods just as they let them keep their own laws." In doing so, the Romans "often themselves adopted [the pantheons] of the vanquished in giving all the sundry rights of citizenship," making their "Paganism" the sole religion throughout their empire.[117] However, following the emergence of Jesus Christ and the subsequent fall of Rome, Rousseau described a critical shift in this dynamic that undermined the power of states throughout the centuries:

> "Many peoples, even in Europe or nearby, have tried to preserve or re-establish the ancient system, but without success: the spirit of Christianity has won completely. The religious cult has always kept, or recovered, independence of the sovereign, and has lacked its necessary [connection] with the state."[118]

In other words, religion served as a dangerous rival to the power and legitimacy of the state unless it could be successfully subdued.

A skeptic of Christianity at heart, Napoleon adopted Rousseau's approach to religion with enthusiasm. Written between 1786 and 1787, the Corsican's essay "The Refutation of Roustan" challenged the titular Swiss clergyman for his prior condemnation of Rousseau's discourses on theology. Napoleon outlines his understanding of religion as follows:

> "Is the Christian religion good for the political constitution of a state? . . . Anything that breaks social unity is worthless. All institutions that place man in contradiction with himself are worthless. Since these principles are indisputable, Mr. Roustan cannot retract them, but he denies that the Reformed Catholic

[116] Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, 177.
[117] Ibid., 178.
[118] Ibid., 179.

> religions are in this case. As far as the Roman religion is concerned, it is obvious that the unity of the State has been broken."[119]

Here, Napoleon wholeheartedly adopts Rousseau's view that the Catholic Church, regardless of any anti-corruption reforms made since the Protestant Reformation, has constantly been a threat to the traditional "unity" between church and state established by ancient Rome. In subsequent paragraphs, Napoleon lodges criticisms against France's Old Regime:

> "We must distinguish the spirit that Christianity has given to the clergy through its constitution from the precise meaning of the law. 'You are more powerful than the sovereign himself', said one, 'you need wealth to support your rank and impose it on the other classes of the State'. . . . Now, Rousseau is only attacking the spirit of the constitution which, by breaking the unity of the State, by making the ministers of religion powerful, wealthy, zealous for their dogmas' intolerance, was the cause of all those wars that have divided Christian states."[120]

In other words, a return to the Roman system of religion, in Napoleon's view, would restore the state's stability and resolve the political rivalries between church and state observed under the Bourbon monarchy. Moreover, Machiavelli's description of Florence's collapse from religious conflict between the Guelphs and Ghibellines would have affirmed these beliefs in Napoleon's eyes by providing practical examples of religion's threat to the state.

After reading *The History of Florence* two to three years later, Napoleon adopted an authoritarian statist understanding of papal authority. In the original text below, Machiavelli suggests that the pontificate can be curbed by more powerful leaders due to papal dependence on the support of medieval Italian leaders to exert power:

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[119] Bonaparte, Masson, and Biagi. *Napoléon, manuscrits inédits, 1786-1791: publiés d'après les originaux autographes*, 7-8.
[120] Ibid., 10.

> "The Pope had more or less power in Rome, and in all Italy, according as his [favor] was more or less with the [Holy Roman] Emperor, or other persons which were more potent than he."[121]

Specifically, the Italian philosopher identifies "forces" such as the Holy Roman Emperor as key actors who contain the church's power through the "favors" they provide (and deny) the Pope. Curiously, Napoleon re-interprets papal authority as being dependent on another power:

> "In Rome . . . the Pope's authority was greater or lesser, depending on how much it was supported by the people."[122]

Here, Napoleon interprets the papacy as a separate entity dependent on the consent of the masses (or popular sovereignty) to supersede the rule of the state. In doing so, Napoleon implies popular support for the Pope to be a crucial nexus for the state to subjugate religion. While Rousseau touted the dangers organized religion posed to the state, Machiavelli offered Napoleon two ways to consolidate power over the church: achieve control over the Pope or mimic his appeals to popular faith to siphon followers.

In summary, Machiavelli's *The History of Florence* provided a practical application for Napoleon's republican ideals between 1786 and 1792. Following in the footsteps of his childhood hero Pasquale Paoli, Napoleon took a keen interest in Machiavelli, leading him to analyze *The History of Florence*. In doing so, he came to view the erupting French Revolution as an opportunity to act as an agent of Corsican liberation on behalf of his mentor. Concurrently, the young Corsican began developing his political thought surrounding the state and religion. Initially, his studies of Jean-Jacques Rousseau taught him the value of republican government and the threat of religion to the state. However, due to his personal fascination with the

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[121] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The History of Florence, from the Translation of the Works of the Famous Nicolas Machiavel Published in 1675*, 52.
[122] Bonaparte, Masson, and Biagi. *Napoléon, manuscrits inédits, 1786-1791: publiés d'après les originaux autographes*, 499.

perspective of the state and its need to cultivate power, Napoleon's reading of Machiavelli shaped his political thinking in three ways. First, the medieval Italian power struggles depicted by Machiavelli taught him the value of constitutional government and the rule of law in providing societal stability in contrast to the factionalism between the Guelphs and Ghibellines. Second, while *The History of Florence* reaffirmed the views of religion he inherited from Rousseau, passages discussing the Papacy's legitimacy helped Napoleon recognize the value of popular sovereignty and religious faith as tools to secure power. Finally, the example of the Venetian diaspora supplied Napoleon with a potential application for these lessons for Corsicans: to establish a strong, independent republic free from French tyranny. As I shall elaborate in the following section, Napoleon's analysis of the *History of Florence* cultivated a pragmatic approach to the politics of the French Revolution that would come to define his path to power.

1.3 Great Enterprises: The Machiavelli-Inspired Statecraft of Napoleon's Italian Campaign

As I have demonstrated throughout this work, the exact point at which Napoleon initially read Machiavelli's *The Prince* remains unknown. The earliest estimates can be traced to 1786, when he first read the Abbé de Germanes' work on Paoli and his seeming attachment to Machiavelli. Alternatively, historian Steven Englund has dated Napoleon's "loss of political virginity" to 1793 with the replacement of his Corsican patriotism with "shots of Machiavelli and Voltaire" as guiding principles for his political thought. He cites Napoleon's commentary on the nature of the French Revolution from this period as evidence:

> "Europe is divided between sovereigns who command men and sovereigns who command cattle and horses. The first understand the Revolution perfectly, they are terrified of it, and would willingly make financial sacrifices toward contributing to destroy it, but they would never tear the mask off of it, for fear it would take fire in their own countries. . . . As for sovereigns who command

> horses, they do not grasp the constitution; they despise it; they believe that it is a chaos of incoherent ideas that will bring the ruin of the French Empire."[123]

While this letter accurately reflects Napoleon's perspective on the French state and its struggles to stabilize revolutionary politics, Englund does not provide any specific passage from the works of Machiavelli or Voltaire to contextualize his claim.

Moreover, as we have seen in the previous section, these shifts in Napoleon's thinking actually began in 1792 with his criticism of King Louis XVI, and can be tacitly attributed to his reading of *The History of Florence* three years prior. As Lucien Bonaparte described his brother's political character that same year: "I've long discerned in [Napoleon] a completely self-centered ambition that outstrips his love for the common good. I really believe in a free state, he is a dangerous man."[124] Given Napoleon's emphasis on "public happiness" in his critiques against monarchy from 1788, this implication that the future emperor had always been self-centered or never fully believed in a "free state" is partially inaccurate. Nevertheless, this description accurately underscores the authoritarian shift in Napoleon's political thinking after reading Machiavelli's works. Thus, the time frame in which Napoleon adopted the philosophies of *The Prince* can be inferred by tracing his explicit references to specific passages from Machiavelli's work. Using this line of logic as a reference, I infer that Napoleon first read *The Prince* between his reading of the Abbé de Germanes' narrative in 1786 and his developing political pragmatism circa 1792. That being said, he did not fully adopt Machiavelli's philosophies until taking charge of French military campaigns in Italy circa 1796, when the opportunity to amass power presented itself.

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[123] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 58-59.
[124] Lucien Bonaparte, quoted in Ibid., 52.

During this four-year gap between 1792 and 1796, two key events contributed to Napoleon's complete adoption of Machiavelli's philosophies in revolutionary French politics. The first episode centered on the Bonaparte family's falling out with Pasquale Paoli during his attempted return to power in Corsica circa 1792-1793. Hoping to achieve independence by courting favor with the revolutionary government in France, Paoli initially pledged Corsica's support for the 1791 French constitution. However, radical Jacobins' increasing hostility to French clergy throughout 1792 alienated Corsica's predominantly Catholic population, prompting Paoli to increasingly side with French royalists within the ruling National Convention. As previously noted, Napoleon secretly hoped to use his appointment to the Ajaccio National Guard in March 1792 as an opportunity to serve Corsican interests from within France's military.[125] Unfortunately, his brother and skilled orator Lucien Bonaparte had aligned himself with the radical Jacobin Club in Corsica, prompting Paoli to distance himself from the family to maintain his support among French royalists. As Joseph Bonaparte mused on Paoli's decision to deny Lucien a position as his secretary: "[Lucien] can have no hope at all that the General [Paoli] would want him with him. He has stated this openly. He recognizes his talents, but does not merge with us. This is the basis of the affair."[126] As a result, Napoleon found himself faced with a difficult choice: Should he uphold the nationalistic idealism of his youth by supporting Paoli or break with him to retain his status within the French military.

Ultimately, Napoleon chose to forsake his idol after suffering one too many perceived indignities from the Corsican leader. Believing Napoleon's glorification of his role in Corsican history to be overdramatic, Paoli rebuked his *Lettres sur la Corse* in April 1791 by stating that

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[125] Ibid., 46-47.
[126] Joseph Bonaparte, quoted in Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 105.

"history is not written in youth" and could only be done with "maturity and balance."[127] This response, coupled with Paoli's decision not to appoint Joseph Bonaparte as Corsica's representative in France's Legislative Assembly in October 1791, became an initial source of discontent between mentor and mentee.[128] However, Paoli's failed attempt to invade Sardinia on behalf of France in February 1793 came to disillusion Napoleon from his idol entirely for both personal and professional reasons. For one, the invasion succumbed to poor planning from its conception due to corrupt Corsican administrators siphoning the support funds and the Marseilles National Guard sending only 4,500 of the 6,000 troops they had promised. Seeing an opportunity for glory and to court Paoli's favor, Napoleon quickly volunteered to join the expedition as a Lieutenant-Colonel.[129] Unfortunately, anti-Corsican prejudice among the Marseilles troops prompted the French to abandon their Corsican counterparts to heavy gunfire upon reaching their target: the island of La Maddalena--leaving Napoleon and his men to fend for themselves. Upon hearing rumors that Paoli had ordered the mission's commander Colonna-Cesari to sabotage the enterprise ahead of time, Napoleon quickly disavowed him for this seeming betrayal and left to rejoin the French military in June 1793, leading Paoli to exile the entire Bonaparte family.[130] This chain of events illustrates two critical developments in the pragmatism of Napoleon's political thought. On one hand, his break with Paoli underscored his shedding of any Corsican nationalist ideals from his youth, as evident by his refusal to discuss the subject in his writings after 1793. Napoleon repurposed his desire to defend the revolution by courting an emerging figure who could simultaneously advance his career: Robespierre.

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[127] Pasquale Paoli, quoted in Napoléon Bonaparte, Frédéric Masson, and Guido Biagi, *Napoléon Inconnu, papiers inédits (1769-1793)*, vol. 2 (Paris: Ollendorff, 1895), 199; Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 45.
[128] Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 83.
[129] Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 106.
[130] Ibid., 109-111.

The second event that inspired Napoleon's turn to Machiavelli and the pursuit of power was the outbreak of Maximillien Robespierre's terror following the insurrection of May 31 - June 2, 1793. While these two figures never formally met, Napoleon's friendship with the Montagnard leader's brother Augustin Robespierre in the spring of 1794 secured government support for his military ventures. Impressed with the young Corsican's planning of the Siege of Toulon (August - December 1793), Augustin praised Napoleon in a letter to his brother:

> "I would add to the list of patriots the name of citizen Buonaparte, general chief of the artillery, an officer of transcended merit. He is . . . a man who resisted Paoli's caress, and who [as a result] saw his property ravaged by this traitor."[131]

Here, Augustin cites the Bonaparte family's expulsion from Corsica and Napoleon's rebuke of Paoli as evidence of the young officer's loyalty to the radicals. As a result, Napoleon's decision to break with the Corsican leader incentivized him to secure his career by supporting the ruling Montagnard regime. Besides the aforementioned document, there is no other primary evidence of Napoleon describing his politics throughout the Committee of Public Safety's tenure (June 1793 - July 1794), likely fearing being sent to the guillotine should his correspondences fall into Montagnard hands. These fears are particularly understandable given his brief imprisonment by the Thermidorians in August 1794 for associating with Augustin.[132] Despite his lingering distaste for the violent mobs of *sans-culottes* that formed Robespierre's base of support, his views of the Jacobin leader gradually softened over time.[133] Reminiscing in his memoirs on St. Helena in 1816, Napoleon stated that "for the first time since the start of the Revolution, people were

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[131] Augustin Robespierre, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 67.
[132] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 55.
[133] For context, the term *sans-culottes* refers to lower-class extreme revolutionaries who controlled the local government of Paris throughout the French Revolution. These individuals aided the Montagnards seizure of power and frequently relied on mob rule to assert their power, as evident by the insurrection of May 31 - June 2, 1793.

sentenced to death as ultra-revolutionaries, rather than for trying to stop the Revolution."[134] In short, Napoleon embraced the example set by Robespierre and his government: the rule of law maintained via the dread of terror by a "glorious strongman."

Following Robespierre's overthrow in July 1794, Machiavelli's conception of a republican government (dubbed "civil principalities") provided Napoleon food for thought on how to remedy the seeming instability of the French Directory (1795-1799). In his chapter of *The Prince* on the subject, the philosopher characterizes these states by the "leading citizen" appointed to rule who requires neither "genius or fortune altogether necessary to attain . . . it, but rather a happy shrewdness [read: cleverness]." Machiavelli then describes how these leaders rise to power "either by the favor of the people or by the favor of the nobles," whose conflicting desires to supplant the other's power give the prince a choice between which group to protect and which group to oppress.[135] When this choice emerges, he argues that rulers who rise to power via popular support can easily maintain their loyalty by ensuring that nobles do not oppress their constituents. By contrast, Machiavelli advises princes who seek power by catering to aristocratic interests to:

> "win the people over to himself . . . Because men, when they receive good from him of whom they were expecting evil, are bound more closely to their benefactor; thus the people quickly become more devoted to him."[136]

That is, within the context of a "civil" republican government, the support of the people is key to ensuring rulers maintain a stable base of power, which only "leading citizens" of genius and fortune could cultivate.

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[134] Emmanuel-August-Dieudonné de Las Cases, *Le Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, June 12th, 1816, quoted in Ibid., 69.
[135] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 41.
[136] Ibid., 42-43.

From 1795 onwards, Napoleon directed his words and actions towards two goals: to cultivate a reputation as a "leading citizen" within France and use his image to supplant the Directory. While Napoleon publicly showed support for the Thermidorian government, he subtly used Machiavelli's concept of the "civil principality" as a means to criticize the regime's instability. Previously, he had defended the Thermidorians against an attempted royalist takeover during the uprising of 13 Vendémiaire in October 1795, resulting in his promotion to a Major General of the French army. Upon taking command of the Italian campaign (1796-1797) during the War of the First Coalition (1792-1797), Napoleon expressed his own mixed support of the regime due to their difficulties securing supplies for his men. In a letter sent to the executive leadership dated May 6, 1796, he spelled out his views as follows:

> "Speaking for myself, it is long since anything could increase the esteem and devotion that I intend to show . . . toward the Government and the Constitution. I saw that Government set up amidst a welter of deplorable passions, whose common issue could only be the destruction of France and the French Republic . . . My motto will always be to die, if need be, in its defence."[137]

On the surface, Napoleon's declaration appears to pledge loyalty by emphasizing his desire to die in battle on the government's behalf if needed. In reality, Napoleon declared the Thermidorian regime to be the antithesis of Machiavelli's "civil principality": a government whose stability depended on the "deplorable passions" of French nobility united behind only one goal—preventing "the destruction of France."

Napoleon further justified his defiance of the Directory by distinguishing himself as a "genius" among France's generals. In a letter dated May 14, 1796, Napoleon criticized the ruling elite's decision to send French General Kellermann to support him in northern Italy:

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[137] Napoleon Bonaparte to the Executive Directory, 6 May 1796, in Napoleon I and Thompson, *Letters of Napoleon*, 70-71.

> "Kellermann would command the army quite as well as I do . . . But I am convinced that to combine Kellermann and myself in Italy would be to court disaster. I cannot willingly serve alongside a man who considers himself the best general in Europe. . . . Fighting is like governing; it needs tact."[138]

Once again, Napoleon projects his critiques as a pledge of service to the Thermidorian elite by offering them the "tact" needed for his Italian campaign. Here, he evoked one characteristic of Machiavelli's "leading citizen" concept: "a happy shrewdness [read: cleverness]" for recognizing the disadvantage of having Kellermann—a potential rival for military "glory"—in his midst.[139] In response to this veiled defiance, the Directory ordered General Henri Clarke to meet Napoleon on November 16, 1796, and assess "his morality and talents."[140] Napoleon soon demonstrated his "morality" when he requested emergency supplies from the commissary Garrau three days later:

> "The army is without shoes, without pay, without clothes, the hospitals lack everything, our wounded are lying on the floors, and in the most horrible state of destitution . . . The [horror] is so great that a remedy is necessary. I beg you to reply to me during the day whether you can provide for the needs of my army."[141]

Clarke's report the following month also described French soldiers' reaction to Napoleon's actions: "There is no one here who doesn't regard him as a genius . . . He has great influence over the individuals who compose the republican army."[142] Across each episode, Napoleon cultivated his image around two key characteristics of Machiavelli's "leading citizen" ideal: his cleverness as a general and his ability to "win [soldiers] over to himself" as a benefactor for their needs.

Machiavelli's advice on how to identify competent and trustworthy advisors for the state gave Napoleon additional ammunition to criticize the Directory. In his chapter of *The Prince*

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[138] Napoleon Bonaparte to Citizen Carnot, 14 May 1796, in Ibid., 72-73.
[139] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 41.
[140] The Executive Directory to Henri Clarke, 16 November 1796, quoted in Jacques Godechot, *Les Commissaires aux armées sous le Directoire. Contribution à l'étude des rapports entre les pouvoirs civils et militaires* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1941), 1:550.
[141] Napoleon Bonaparte to Commissary Garrau, 19 November 1796, in Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 269.
[142] Henri Clarke to the Executive Directory, December 7, 1796, quoted in Ibid., 267.

titled "Concerning the Secretaries of Princes," the philosopher emphasized the importance of choosing "capable and faithful" advisors to serve the state, denoting how leaders could judge these qualities via "one test which never fails: when you see the servant thinking more of his own interests than to yours, and seeking inwardly his own profit in everything." "Such a man will never make a good servant, nor will you be able to trust him" argues Machiavelli, "because he who has the state of another in his hands ought never to think of himself, but always of his prince."[143] In other words, competent advisors should be judged based not only on their ability to serve the state's demands, but also their trustworthiness towards fulfilling these needs.

Using Machiavelli's advice, Napoleon lambasted the Directory's decision to use civilian commissioners as administrators for his newly-conquered Italian territories. In a letter to French leadership dated August 26, 1796, Napoleon expressed his concern about the chaos caused by a commissioner named Salva during the ongoing campaign in Milan:

> "He sees enemies everywhere. He crosses the Po and infects everyone he meets with the fears that distract him. . . . Such are the disadvantages of the law which insists that war commissioners shall be civilians . . . This incident has convinced me how essential it is to appoint . . . only men who have served several campaigns with the troops, and have given proof of their courage. No man ought to belong to the French army who values his life more highly than the glory of the nation, and the good opinion of his comrades."[144]

Here, Napoleon outlines his methods for judging the competency of commissioners based on whether they "value their life" (or rather, personal interests) more than "the glory of the [French] nation." To illustrate this point, he offered the ruling Directors his personal views of the generals serving under him:

> "*Berthier*: a man with ability, energy, courage, character; everything in his favor.

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[143] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 99-100.

[144] The law that Napoleon refers to here is a decree passed by the National Convention on April 9, 1793, stating that all armies must have civil *commissaires* deployed with them. For details, see Napoleon Bonaparte to the Executive Directory, 26 August 1796, in Napoleon I and Thompson. *Letters of Napoleon*, 83-84.

> *Augereau*: plenty of character, courage, firmness, energy; is accustomed to war, popular with his men, lucky in the field.
> . . . . *Serurier*: fights like a soldier; dislikes responsibility; firm, has too poor an opinion of his men; an invalid
> *Despinoy*: dull, slack, unenterprising; doesn't understand war, is unpopular with his men, doesn't use his head; in other ways a man of high character, intelligence, and sound political principles; good for a home command."[145]

By reflecting on his experiences with Salva and Machiavelli's criteria for ideal "secretaries," Napoleon recognized his need for supporting generals who would be "capable and faithful" to both his leadership and French interests within Italy. In other words, Napoleon began to adopt the role of Machiavelli's "prince" when he took over military duties normally reserved for the ruling government: the staffing of competent advisors for the Italian campaign.

Building on his search for Machiavelli's ideal "secretaries," Napoleon also took note of the capable talent that he could recruit from within Milan to improve the scientific and cultural renown of the French state. Expressing his fascination for the city-state's talented artists and scientists, he outlined his intentions to the astronomer Oriani in a letter dated May 1796:

> "Science, which dignifies the mind of men, and Art, which beautifies life, and transmits its great achievements to posterity, ought to be specially honoured by every free government. Every man of genius, every office-holder in the Republic of letters, in whatever country he may have been born, is a French citizen."[146]

Here, Napoleon expands upon Machiavelli's conception of "secretaries" through an alternative source of talent he observes within Milan: scientific and cultural experts who could advance France's military technology and cultural reputation. He continues his letter by declaring the conquest of Milan to be a golden opportunity to put the talents of these individuals to (personal) use after years of the city-state's "kings and priests" discrediting their value:

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[145] Napoleon Bonaparte to the Executive Directory, 14 August 1796, in Ibid., 81-82.
[146] Napoleon Bonaparte to Citizen Oriani, 24 May 1796, in Ibid., 74-75.

> "I invite all learned men to meet together, and to tell me what methods should be adopted, or what needs supplied, in order to give the sciences a new life and a new existence . . .The French people sets a higher value upon the acquisition of a learned mathematician, a famous painter, or the distinguished exponent of any branch of study, than upon that of the richest and most populous city in the world."[147]

By promising citizenship and financial support to all who could serve France's scientific and artistic needs, Napoleon acquired cultural advisors for France who became indebted to him through this gesture rather than the Directory.

Machiavelli's commentary on the need for rulers to become renowned through their actions offered Napoleon a means to fully outshine the Directory: perform unique and daring deeds on the battlefield to enhance his image in French politics. In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "How a Prince Should Conduct Himself so as to Gain Renown," the philosopher argues how there is "nothing makes a prince so much esteemed as great enterprises and setting a fine example." Specifically, he cites the case of King Ferdinand of Aragon, who defused potential threats to his power by preoccupying the barons of Castille with war and used the Catholic Church's financial support to maintain his armies. As a result, Ferdinand established the first unified Kingdom of Spain, which Machiavelli describes as having successfully "kept the mind of the people in suspense and admiration and occupied with the issue of [his deeds]."[148] The ultimate goal of these steps, the philosopher argues, is to "always endeavor in every action to gain for himself the reputation of being a great and remarkable man."[149] In other words, by actively engaging in and achieving exorbitant deeds and goals, rulers can shape their images as seemingly "great" and "powerful" people worthy of the authority they possess. The "glorious

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[147] Ibid.
[148] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 94.
[149] Ibid., 95.

strongman" ideal from Napoleon's youth coupled with Machiavelli's advice on statecraft provided the future emperor two ways to demonstrate his merit as a "leading citizen" within France: military conquest and client-state-building.

French military campaigns in Italy (1796-1797) supplied several opportunities to develop the "glorious strongman" image of Napoleon's youth by providing France what the Directory seemingly could not: power, prestige, and effective state-building. As I have previously elaborated, Napoleon followed through on this advice when he offered the ruling Thermidorians advice with choosing advisors. However, Napoleon's creation of the Cisalpine Republic in Italy reflected his desire to experiment with statecraft when he applied Machiavelli's philosophies to construct the new state's constitution. For example, in a letter to then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Charles Talleyrand in September 1797, Napoleon conceptualizes his government as a copycat of the Directory with a more authoritarian bend:

> "One of these is supervisory, . . . the National Council: it would control all that part of the administration and of the executive which our present constitution entrusts to the Legislative Power . . . Thus, governmental power would consist of two authorities, both nominated by the people; and one would be a very large body, containing only such persons as had already occupied some of the posts that give men experience in the business of government."[150]

This is an interesting passage with regards to Napoleon's evolution as a state-builder through his combination of ideas from Machiavelli's *The Prince* and *The History of Florence*. On the surface, Napoleon reaffirmed his desire for a powerful authoritarian leader, as evident by the transfer of administrative powers normally controlled by the Directory's legislature to the executive branch. He initially conceptualized this decision maker as an absolute authority charged with maintaining order, akin to the "Captain of the People" Napoleon wrote about in his

[150] Napoleon Bonaparte to Charles Talleyrand, 19 September 1797, in Napoleon I and Thompson. *Letters of Napoleon*, 110-111.

note on Machiavelli's *The History of Florence.* Here, he reinvents his notion of the executive as a "Captain" supported by his troops (or bureaucrats) using passages on "civil principalities" and "secretaries" within *The Prince*—an administrative "National Council" built from experienced civil servants chosen with the "favor" of the people.[151] The end result of this experiment consolidated Machiavelli's ideas on statecraft to create a stable (albeit authoritarian) client-state under the thumb of its architect: Napoleon himself.

Napoleon also hinted in this letter how Machiavelli's ideas could be used to reform and or replace the institutions of France's ruling Directory. For example, he gives the legislature the power to enact "organic laws" but with no authority to repeal them until after four to five months of debate. Napoleon then outlined how the rule of an inflexible body of law formed the bedrock principle of his ideal government in his letter to Talleyrand:

> "This Legislative Power, carrying no rank in the Republic, closed to outside influence, hearing and seeing nothing of what goes on around it, would have no ambitions, and would not inundate us with thousands of ephemeral measures, whose very absurdity defeats their own ends, and which have turned us into a nation with 300 law books in folio, and not a single law."[152]

Here, Napoleon implies his disdain for the Directory's legislative procedures in his proposal for a government designed to be the Thermidorians' antithesis—"closed to outside influence," lacking ambitions, and the center of a stable, unified body of French law. To this end, he harkens back to Machiavelli's notion of "civil principalities" by designing a legislature catered to the "interests of the people" in contrast to the ruling elites' preference for the "interests of nobles" (or rather, themselves). As a result, I infer that Napoleon's pursuit of civilian power in Italy is rooted in his desire to reform inefficiencies of the Directory he identified within Machiavelli's philosophies.

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[151] This is likely an early conceptualization of the "Conseil d'Etat" that Bonaparte established upon seizing power in 1799, which served as the council of advisors around which Napoleon crafted policy and directed his executive bureaucracy throughout the duration of his reign.
[152] Ibid.

Ultimately, Napoleon's constitutions for the Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics served as a testing ground for establishing his ideal "Machiavelli-inspired" regime. For example, Article 17 from the Cisalpine Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen affirms that all "sovereignty resides essentially in the universality of the citizens," affirming Napoleon's insistence on the popular consent of the masses to ensure the puppet regime's legitimacy.[153] The Ligurian Republic's declaration followed suit, stating how "Sovereignty is the exercise of the general will; it resides essentially in the people: it is indivisible, inalienable, imprescriptible."[154] However, the Cisalpine preamble also charged "the general in chief in the name of the French Republic," (or rather, Napoleon himself) with appointing initial members for the new government's executive branch. Following from his letter's initial blueprint, Article 20 of the Cisalpine constitution declared that "there shall be at least one primary assembly in each district" to form the basis of the regime's legislative branch, each consisting of between 450 and 900 representatives.[155] Article 32 of the Ligurian constitution maintained the same setup, but with membership between 300 and 600 representatives.[156] Cisalpine articles 74 and 75 followed suit by establishing a supervisory "Grand Council" to govern all administrative lawmaking powers. All proposed laws under this system had to be "three times read; [while] the interval [between] the [first] two readings cannot be less than 10 days."[157] Concurrently, the Ligurian system's "Council of Sixty" upheld the same structure verbatim, with the mandatory ten-day period required on the third reading as well.[158] In both cases, Napoleon established governments derivative of Machiavelli's

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[153] *Constitution des républiques française, cisalpine et ligurienne, dans les quatre langues françaises, allemandes, anglaises et italiennes; précédée de l'acte d'indépendance des Etats-Unis d'Amérique* (Paris: Lemierre, 1799), 1:5.
[154] Ibid., 2:3.
[155] Ibid., 1:23.
[156] Ibid., 2:17.
[157] Ibid., 1:39.
[158] Ibid., 2:37.

ideal "civil principality": stable constitutional republics catered to the "favor of the people" without the legal instability of the ruling French Directory.

Furthermore, Napoleon's amendments to the constitutions of his Italian client states showcased his pragmatic application of Machiavelli's advice on religion. In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "Concerning Ecclesiastical Principalities," Machiavelli described states governed by "the ancient ordinances of religion" as "secure and happy" because they are kept in line by "powers to which the human mind cannot reach."[159] In other words, the submission of subjects within an ecclesiastical principality rested upon the people's trust in its leaders as representatives of their religion. As previously discussed, Napoleon had identified popular support for the Pope as a crucial nexus for the state to subjugate religion within *The History of Florence*. Blending these ideas with passages from *The Prince*, Napoleon took steps to undermine the Pope's authority without directly alienating local Christian supporters of the papacy in France's client states. As he stated to archbishop Filippo Visconti upon entering French-conquered Milan in 1796, "Each person will be able to recognize his God and practice the cult inspired by his conscience, without fear of seeing it not respected."[160] Chapter 1 of the constitution for the nearby Ligurian Republic codified this declaration, stating that the new French puppet regime "preserves in its integrity the Christian Catholic religion which it professes since many ages."[161] Lastly, Napoleon requested that "as long as the ministers of religion hold true principles, [he would] respect them, their property and their customs, as they contribute to public order and the common weal."[162] These guarantees of religious freedom not only kept native Italians "secure and happy," but also ensured local clergy remained in line with the "true principles" of

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[159] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 49.
[160] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 277.
[161] *Constitution des républiques française, cisalpine et ligurienne*, 2:9.
[162] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 475.

Catholicism's "ancient ordinances" to maintain this happiness in the long term. Drawing on passages from Machiavelli's *The Prince* and *The History of Florence*, Napoleon cultivated the image of his client-state governments as respectful of the Catholic faith to build popular support for French rule over Italy at the expense of the Pope.

These state-building efforts proved especially helpful for cultivating Napoleon's reputation as a "glorious strongman" following the Directory's string of military defeats over the next two years. For one, the breakdown of Napoleon's Treaty of Campo-Formio (1797) due to Austrian dissent at the loss of their Italian lands culminated in the outbreak of the War of the Second Coalition in 1798, leading Austria to seize control of the sister republics established in Italy. The subsequent attempt to reconquer these territories at the Battle of Novi on August 15, 1799 resulted in a French defeat and the death of the commanding general, Joubert. Furthermore, French defeats in the German states at the hands of Russian general Alexander Suvorov circa March 1799 prompted the evacuation of French-controlled Switzerland. Worse still, Dutch navies who had previously sided with France earlier in the revolution now opted to join British Coalition forces in the wake of these defeats. As a result, state stability and prosperity now became intertwined with Napoleon's actions in the eyes of the French public due to the contrast between his results and what the exiled Marquis de Lafayette described as the Directory's "national mess."[163]

Following his return from Egypt in October 1799, Napoleon finally embraced the possibility of staging a coup d'état against the Directory due to the domestic popularity of his Machiavelli-inspired "great enterprises." As General Paul Thiébault recalled of Napoleon's return to Paris in his memoirs:

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[163] Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 150-151.

> "The general commotion of Paris left no doubt as to the truth of the news. . . . the return was announced by shouts of 'Vive la République! Vive Bonaparte!' It was not the return of a general; it was the return of a leader in the garb of a general . . . Only the ghost of a government remained in France. Breached by all parties, the Directory was at the mercy of the first assault."[164]

Here, descriptions of Napoleon as a "leader in the garb of a general" emphasized the impact of his military conquests and statecraft in Italy as unique qualities unlike those of other French generals. As a result, the cheers of "Vive la République! Vive Bonaparte!" that accompanied Napoleon's return to Paris illustrated his success in cultivating a "glorious strongman" reputation among France's public. While the ruling Directors privately contemplated charging him with desertion for leaving Egypt without their approval, they ultimately relented to avoid giving Napoleon and his civilian supporters an excuse to turn against the unpopular regime. Napoleon also hoped to use French civilians' adulation for his leadership as a malleable source of "popular sovereignty" to overthrow the Directory now that his reputation had become politically attached to the country's stability. As he dictated to Thiébault on October 26, 1799, Napoleon outlined his official position for staging the coup:

> "A nation is always what you have the wit to make it . . . The triumph of faction parties, divisions, is the fault of those in authority only . . . No people are bad under a good government, just as no troops are bad under good generals . . . These [Directors] are bringing France to the level of their own blundering. They are degrading her, and [France] is beginning to repudiate them."[165]

Here, Napoleon capitalizes on his popularity to win over Thiébault's support for 18 Brumaire by contrasting the factionalism of the Directory with the implied force of will that the "nation" namely, Napoleon and his troops) accomplished in Italy. By practicing civilian rule during this

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[164] General Paul Thiébault, quoted in Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 208-209.
[165] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Ibid., 213.

campaign, the soon-to-be First Consul realized the value of Machiavelli's philosophies in cultivating domestic power after successfully repurposing his military "glory" for political ends.

In summary, Machiavelli's advice concerning civil principalities and the legitimation of power via "great enterprises" within *The Prince* formed the theoretical basis of Napoleon's ambitions in his Italian campaign. Building on his initial reading of *The History of Florence* several years earlier, Napoleon began to develop a pragmatic outlook on the French Revolution, culminating in his reading of *The Prince* sometime between 1786 and 1792. However, his falling out with Paoli in 1793, coupled with his disdain towards the Directory regime (1795-1799), prompted Napoleon to embrace Machiavelli's ideas to fuel his ambitions. In particular, his military prowess and appeals to revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality during his Italian campaign (1796-1797) allowed him to feign loyalty to the Directory while honing his statecraft by constructing governments for French client states. As a result, he built his reputation as a "glorious strongman" by accomplishing in Italy what the Directory seemingly could not in France: stable republican governments with moral and physical "unity" reminiscent of the "civil principalities" described within *The Prince*.

1.4 Chapter Conclusions

Ultimately, the evidence suggests that Napoleon's political thought gradually incorporated ideas reminiscent of Machiavelli's philosophies as they became useful to his pursuit of power throughout the French Revolution. Inspired by the Italian philosopher's examples of power consolidation and particularly medieval Florentine statecraft, Napoleon repurposed the ideals of Corsican patriotism and Rousseauism from his youth to rise in the ranks of the various regimes of the French Revolution (1789-1799). In his observations of Louis XVI, Robespierre's

terror (June 1793-July 1794), and the Directory (1795-1799), Napoleon took note of their respective failures to unite the French people behind a common policy versus factionalism and infighting. As a result, he became disillusioned with his childhood ideals and used ideas from the intellectual aether of Machiavelli's philosophies to guide his ambitions towards a pursuit of power. To do so, he cultivated the image of a glorious and powerful "man on horseback" via military conquest to project himself as a "savior" and restore the political "unity" he felt had been lost during the French Revolution.

At first, the Corsican nationalist leader Pasquale Paoli instilled the young Napoleon Bonaparte with national patriotism and an early exposure to the works of Machiavelli. In the context of his troubled assimilation to French society, Napoleon turned to the histories of his native Corsica and the propagandized heroism of Paoli to assert himself among his peers. Napoleon began to revere the Corsican leader and the "glorious strongman" archetype he appeared to represent. Hoping to follow in his idol's footsteps, Napoleon began advocating for Corsican interests in the early days of the French Revolution, as illustrated in his unpublished *Lettres sur la Corse* circa 1788. During this period of study, he learned of his hero's adoption of Machiavelli's philosophies and their role in the conquest of his homeland from the Abbé de Germanes's narrative. As a result, Napoleon developed a lifelong fascination with Machiavelli and his works.

Building on this initial exposure, Napoleon consulted and made notes on Machiavelli's *The History of Florence* circa 1789, which offered practical applications for his ideals within the context of medieval Florentine power struggles. Years prior, the works of his other inspiration Jean-Jacques Rousseau taught him the value of republican government to address the masses' desire for equality and also the threat that religion posed to the authority of the state. However,

the Revolution prompted his personal fascination with the perspective of the state and pushed Napoleon to rely on the examples of Machiavelli as the basis for his outlook on the Revolution, as evident by his critiques of King Louis XVI. Concurrently, he saw a reflection of his Corsican nationalist dreams within Machiavelli's examples of the Venetian diaspora, and began to view the erupting French Revolution as an opportunity to act as an agent of Corsican liberation on behalf of his idol. In either case, Machiavelli provided a philosophical justification for Napoleon's authoritarian interpretations of Rousseau's republican ideals and refined the young Corsican's existing ideas on the role of religion in the state.

Following his initial analysis of *The History of Florence* several years earlier, Napoleon began to develop a pragmatic outlook on the French Revolution, culminating in his reading of *The Prince* sometime between 1786 and 1792. Upon falling out with Paoli in early 1793, Napoleon abandoned his Corsican patriotism in favor of a pragmatic pursuit of power. To fulfill this desire, Napoleon embraced ideas reminiscent of Machiavelli's philosophies to address the seeming political instability of the ruling Directory regime (1795-1799). Napoleon's appeals to revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality and military victories during his Italian campaign (1796-1797) enabled him to develop his reputation as a "glorious strongman," feign loyalty for the ruling French government, and hone his statecraft through the creation of constitutions for its client states. By doing so, he achieved in French puppet regimes what the Directory seemingly could not in France: stable republican governments with moral and physical "unity" reminiscent of the "civil principalities" described within *The Prince*.

Machiavelli's philosophies played a formative role in the development of Napoleon's political thought and desire for power prior to 18 Brumaire. Napoleon's seeming adoption of the political advice within *The Prince* and examples of medieval Florentine politics from *The*

History of Florence underscored his political evolution from idealistic republican nationalist to a pragmatic state builder bent on securing his rule over France and its client states. As I elaborate in the following chapter, Machiavelli's advice served as the means through which his domestic policy retained the "unity" of the masses.

CHAPTER 2: CONCERNING THE NAPOLEONIC CODE AND OTHER WAYS PRINCES KEPT FAITH

Following his coup d'etat on November 9 (18 Brumaire), 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte embarked on an ambitious reform campaign to secure his rule over the people of France. To this end, the "First Consul" mused to his wife Josephine that "effeminacy and inaction would be equally prejudicial" after seizing power. "If I intend my reign to be glorious and lasting," he added, "I must animate their zeal and give employment to their courage."[166] As established in Chapter 1, Napoleon's reading of *The Prince* prompted this dependence on exorbitant deeds to shape his image as a powerful European leader decked in "glory." However, these conclusions raise even more questions: What role did Machiavelli's political philosophies play in shaping Napoleon's domestic reforms to the French state following his seizure of power in 1799?

Historians have often assumed connections between Napoleon's actions and Machiavelli's works. For one, Will and Ariel Durant's volume *The Age of Napoleon* referenced Napoleon's reading of Machiavelli before seizing power as evidence of his "great man" status, particularly in comparison to the failures of other revolutionary regimes. The authors traced Napoleon's earliest reading of Machiavelli to the period between his first assignment in the French military circa October 1785 and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. Allegedly, their conclusion is based on 368 surviving pages of his notes on *The Prince* and other miscellaneous philosophical texts.[167] However, the Durants fail to provide any explicit quotations from Napoleon's notes, leaving their suggestion unsubstantiated. Martin Lyons characterized Napoleon's style of governance as a "Dictatorship of the Plebiscite" that

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[166] Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine Bonaparte, quoted in *Courtiers and Favourites of Royalty: Memoirs of the Court of France* (Paris: Société des Bibliophiles, 1903), 54-55.
[167] Will Durant and Ariel Durant, eds., *The Age of Napoleon: A History of European Civilization from 1789 to 1815* (New York: MJF Books, 1975), 93.

manipulated republican concepts such as local elections in order to pursue power and legitimize his crowning as "Emperor of the French."[168] While this concept echoes passages of Machiavelli's *The Prince* describing "Civil Principalities" ruled by consent from the masses, Lyons never explicitly draws connections between Napoleon and the philosopher's works. Andrew Roberts also hinted at this link indirectly, describing how Napoleon has been "quoted and misquoted . . . his aphorisms plucked at random like passages from Machiavelli's *Prince*."[169] Unfortunately, Roberts and others failed to elaborate on whether there were any connections between the First Consul's policies and Machiavelli's philosophies at all.

However, the philosopher's influence on Napoleon's domestic politics in France proved to be more substantial than historians have previously assumed. When asked if he would restore the Old Regime's unpopular salt tax (the *gabelle*) in March 1806, Napoleon responded that he would only do so "if [he] thought it a useful thing . . . I am sometimes fox and sometimes lion. The whole secret of government consists of knowing when to be the one and when the other."[170] Directly citing a chapter of *The Prince* titled "Concerning the Way in Which Princes Should Keep Faith," Napoleon declared Machiavelli's notion of political flexibility to be the bedrock principle of his regime. To this end, he initiated three domestic reform packages between 18 Brumaire and his abdication in 1814 that addressed calls for "revolutionary" reform while reconfiguring the Old Regime's social hierarchy. First, his 1801 Concordat with Pope Pius VII restored the Catholic Church, which had been deposed in the revolution, while guaranteeing freedom for other religions.[171] Second, Napoleon's Law of 11 Floréal in 1802 produced a new generation of future soldiers and bureaucrats loyal to the ideals of the revolution (and by

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[168] Lyons, *Napoleon Bonaparte and the Legacy of the French Revolution*, 111.
[169] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, xliv.
[170] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Noailles, *The Life and Memoirs of Comte Molé*, 90.
[171] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 272-273.

extension, the First Consul himself) by establishing forty-five state secondary schools (or *lycées*).[172] Finally, his Napoleonic Code of 1804 outlined citizenship and property rights for the former Third Estate while centralizing France's 366 local law codes.[173] However, the code's patriarchal marriage and family estate regulations stripped French women's rights to divorce and to inherit or own property, giving husbands full legal control over their wives.[174]

In this chapter, I argue that Machiavelli's work *The Prince* provided a direct framework from which Napoleon conceptualized and justified his reforms to the French state. Through a textual analysis of *The Prince* in conjunction with Napoleon's correspondence and law codes, I determine that the First Consul's policies and their justifications reflected Machiavelli's specific recommendations on acquiring dictatorial power. This philosophical influence also explains the seeming contradictions between the First Consul's progressive and conservative social policies: these were necessities that "secured the revolution" (or rather, the power of Napoleon himself). Concurrently, these philosophies provide an explanation for the Napoleonic government's political stability compared to prior revolutionary regimes such as the Committee of Public Safety (June 1793-July 1794) and the Directory (1795-1799).

2.1 Concerning Ecclesiastical Principalities and the "Restorer of Religion"

Machiavelli often emphasized religion's immense value as a tactic for consolidating popular support. In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "Concerning Ecclesiastical Principalities," he described states governed by "the ancient ordinances of religion" as "secure and happy," that "may be held no matter how their [rulers] behave and live." To this point, he argued that

[172] Ibid., 280-281.
[173] Ibid., 275.
[174] Ibid., 277-278.

"[religious states] have subjects, [but] do not rule them" because they are kept in line by "powers to which the human mind cannot reach."[175] In other words, the submission of subjects within an ecclesiastical principality depended upon the people's faith in its leaders as representatives of their religion. Machiavelli listed five "good qualities" upon which leaders should build their reputation: Mercy, Loyalty, Sincerity, Humanity, and Piety. The last of these traits he stated to be "[none] more necessary [to have]."[176] Thus, he advised rulers to (at the very least) appear religious among their constituents, to craft an image of themselves as benevolent defenders of the people's religion.

In these regards, Napoleon displayed a similar reverence to religion as a social unifier given the potential unrest that could occur if the clergy opposed him. For example, after learning of the King of Naples' plot to undermine him through collusion with the Pope, Napoleon ruminated on the power of faith with General de Caulaincourt in December 1812:

> "The clergy . . . is a power that is never quiet. Against you unless it is for you, it serves none free of charge. . . . Before it can be the auxiliary of government, it has to be [the state's] friend; and to secure that, the clergy must have its rights clearly defined."[177]

Fearing local parishes' capacity to galvanize his constituents against him, Napoleon saw the support of the clergy as essential to ensuring the social stability of his regime.

Here, to understand Napoleon's need for a resolution with the Papacy, we must consider the domestic influence of the Catholic clergy among French peasants before and throughout the revolution. At the time of the Concordat in 1800, France's population consisted of approximately 28 million, most of which was spread across 36,000 largely rural settlements with a few hundred

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[175] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 49.
[176] Ibid., 76.
[177] Napoleon Bonaparte to General de Caulaincourt, quoted in Jean Hanoteau, *With Napoleon in Russia: The Memoirs of General de Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1935), 392.

people each.[178] During the Old Regime, these communities relied upon the most educated citizens (namely local priests) to dispense information and government decrees. In his chronicle of the Catholic diocese Gap-Embrun, historian Timothy Tackett described the role of the parish priest as "an authority within the community and a mediator to the worlds, natural and supernatural, beyond the community."[179] In particular, powers such as exclusive control of the parish register (all records of a village's baptisms, marriages, and burials) and the issuing of *vingt-quatrième* (portions of tithe collections set aside to feed the poor) gave priests unfettered administrative guardianship over their local communities.[180] Furthermore, church mandates required French clergymen to visit all houses within their parishes annually to compile an *état des âmes* (a list of all individuals, with annotations on their sins) to facilitate local morality policing.[181] From a social control perspective, Napoleon's collaboration with the Catholic clergy established an effective administrative apparatus for his regime by co-opting existing institutions and building political capital among parishioners.

In contrast, prior regimes' distrust of the Catholic Church alienated the conservative peasantry and fostered tensions with revolutionaries. As scholar Nigel Aston argued in his survey of religion during the French Revolution, the period from 1789 to 1799 resulted in faith "moving slowly but irrevocably from the public sphere to the private," thus forming the basis for separation between church and state.[182] Initially, the Civil Constitution drafted by the National Assembly in 1790 mandated that all priests swear an oath in support of the revolution on penalty

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[178] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 271.
[179] Timothy Tackett, *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 151.
[180] For reference, Tithes are special taxes collected by church officials to provide the French clergy's salaries and finance the feeding of the poor in local communities.
[181] Ibid., 152-157.
[182] Nigel Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France, 1780-1804* (Washington D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), x.

of deportation or arrest. As the pro-revolution Abbé Cazeneuve wrote in reaction to the reform, "the Constitution . . . intends only to revive among us the glorious days of the early Church by destroying the abuses introduced by superstition."[183] Most parish clerics (including then-pope Pius VI) condemned the measure as a threat to Catholicism despite the revolutionaries' protection of religious worship in the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen.[184]

Unfortunately, priests' fears of persecution soon proved justified, following Maximilien Robespierre's seizure of power in July 1793. Distrustful of priests' loyalty to the revolution due to their privileged status under the Old Regime, radical Montagnards closed down several churches across France to be converted into "temples of reason" for civic ceremonies.[185] This anticlerical campaign peaked in June 1794 with Robespierre's creation of a "Cult of the Supreme Being" centered on revolutionary ideals to replace the church entirely.[186] In response, local priests and conservative peasants began supporting royalists' ongoing counter-revolutionary uprisings against the Committee of Public Safety in various French provinces with the hope of restoring the church to full power. For example, in his support for the War in the Vendée (March 1793 - July 1796), the royalist priest Abbé Barbotin described himself as "electrified by the idea that religion was going to be avenged."[187] Even after the fall of Robespierre in July 1794, the failure of the incoming Directory to protect religious worship in its constitution the following year heightened conservative peasants' existing opposition to the Republic.[188]

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[183] Abbé Cazeneuve, quoted in Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 276.
[184] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 225.
[185] Ibid., 367.
[186] Ibid., 403.
[187] Abbé Barbotin, quoted in Ibid., 324.
[188] Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France*, 281.

Despite being personally skeptical of Christianity, Napoleon approached faith as a pragmatic tool to secure political control. In a private word with his advisor Pierre-Louis Roederer circa 1800, Napoleon cited the utility of religion as an institution:

> "In religion . . . [I see] the mystery of the social order. It associates with Heaven an idea of equality that keeps rich men from being massacred by the poor . . . Society is impossible without inequality, inequality intolerable without a code of morality, and a code of morality unacceptable without religion."[189]

In other words, religion staved off popular discontent over economic disparities by arguing that all citizens are inherently equal in the eyes of God. In turn, this explanation helped Napoleon justify a Catholic restoration as necessary to safeguard the French Revolution's ideal of equality.

Prior to 18 Brumaire, Napoleon's expedition in Egypt (1798-1799) showcased this use of religion as a tool for political ends in his attempts to court the military support of local Muslims rebelling against Ottoman rule. In his General Orders to the expeditionary forces en route to the region, Napoleon ordered his men not to "contradict" Islamic beliefs. "Deal with them as we have dealt with the Jews and with the Italians," he said, "respect their muftis and imams as you respected rabbis and bishops."[190] Evoking Machiavelli's advice on pacifying religious groups by appearing supportive of their faith, Napoleon took great care not to incite a jihad from his prospective supporters. In a letter to the Mamluks governing Egypt under the Ottomans in 1798, Napoleon implied his seemingly life-long support of Islam in his calls for the region's liberation:

> "People of Egypt! . . . I am come to restore your rights, to [punish] usurpers. I reverence . . . God, his prophet Muhammed and the Koran! . . . Have we not destroyed the Pope, who made men wage war on Muslims?"[191]

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[189] Pierre-Louis Roederer, *Autour de Bonaparte*, 18, quoted in Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 272.
[190] D.A. Bingham, *A Selection From the Letters and Dispatches of the First Napoleon*, (London: Chapman and Hall, Limited, 1884), 1:212-213.
[191] Ibid., 1:210.

However, when asked in exile circa 1818 if he truly embraced Islam, Napoleon replied that "Fighting is a soldier's religion; I never changed that . . . As for me, I always adopt the religion of the country I am in."[192] By declaring his willingness to side with Muslims against the Ottoman Sultan in spite of France's Catholic leanings, Napoleon embraced Machiavelli's advice by using local Egyptians' faith to consolidate popular support within a prospective French colony.

Following its ratification in August 1801, Napoleon's Concordat with Pope Pius VII re-established Catholicism as the state religion in France, albeit with severe limitations to its powers under the Old Regime. For example, Article 1 declared that the "Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion shall be freely exercised in France" to dissuade fears of anticlerical persecution from earlier in the revolution.[193] However, the new authority granted to the French state underscored Napoleon's desire to mitigate the church's role in society. For example, Articles 4 and 5 gave Napoleon the sole jurisdiction to appoint all French bishops while granting the Pope three months' notice of any upcoming appointments. Article 6 also required bishops to "swear and promise to God, upon the Holy Scriptures, to remain in obedience and fidelity to the Government established by the constitution of the French Republic."[194] Napoleon also offered concessions to permit papal influence at the local level without undermining his own authority, such as transferring primary education in local townships to church control.[195]As a result, priests heralded Napoleon as the "restorer of religion" for overturning the Montagnards' anticlerical policies while becoming dependent on his government for their wealth and power.[196]

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[192] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 174.
[193] *Convention Between The French Government And His Holiness Pius VII* (1801), The Napoleon Series Archive, Waterloo Association. Accessed October 21st, 2023. https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/diplomatic/c_concordat.html.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 273.
[196] Ibid., 274.

Supplemental laws passed by Napoleon in the years following the Concordat offered non-Christian minorities the freedom to worship, albeit with added political assimilation requirements. In the case of France's community of 55,000 Jewish bankers, Napoleon's pragmatic approach to religion exposed the underlying tension between his personal self-interest and appeal to revolutionary ideals of religious freedom. Initially, his "Decree on Jews and Usury" in May 1806 offered French Christians a year-long exemption from repayments on their loans to Jewish moneylenders in the province of Alsace, whose "unjust greed" and lack of "sentiments of civic morality" he chastised.[197] However, in the interest of securing the investors' taxable income for his military campaigns, Napoleon quickly reversed course. To this point, his hosting of a Grand Sanhedrin of Rabbis in 1807 established Judaism as one of France's official religions and co-opted the council as Jews' official governing body within the regime.[198] As the First Consul described after the summit, "I thought that this would bring to France many riches because the Jews are numerous and they could come in large numbers to our country where they would enjoy more privileges than any other nation."[199] In spite of his underlying anti-semitic attitudes, Napoleon's guarantees of religious worship secured popular support among France's Jewish community and a source of financial backing for his conquests abroad.

Napoleon's Organic Articles of 1802 universalized his guarantees of religious expression to all Protestant sects of Christianity while attempting to assimilate their parishes in the process. As Article 6 described, "the arrangements provided by the organic articles of the Catholic worship upon the liberty of endowments, and upon the nature of the estates which can be the object thereof, shall be common to the Protestant churches." Article 2 followed by declaring that

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[197] Ibid., 402-403.
[198] Ellis, *Napoleon: Profiles in Power*, 65.
[199] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 404.

"neither the Protestant churches nor their ministers [will] have relations with any foreign power or authority" besides the Napoleonic regime.[200] In doing so, Napoleon extended the state's power limitations on Roman Catholic clergy to all other Christian communities. However, Napoleon's regulation of clerical education and vocational training incentivized Protestant leaders' submission to his authority. For example, Articles 9 and 11 established two seminary academies in Eastern France to train ministers in Protestant doctrine, each staffed with professors personally appointed by Napoleon. Articles 12 and 13 also mandated all priests to be formally certified at one of these seminaries as a qualification to be elected minister or head pastor for their local parishes.[201] Thus, Napoleon secured the loyalty of France's Protestant communities by making them dependent on his regime and its education system for power.

In summary, Machiavelli's commentary on religion as a tool of social control formed the theoretical basis of Napoleon's restoration of the Catholic Church and guarantees of religious freedom. Taking the philosopher's advice that religious groups could be pacified if the state permitted the expression of their faith, Napoleon proclaimed Catholicism as France's state religion to acquire domestic support from Christian peasants disillusioned by the Montagnards' anticlerical persecutions. Building on priests' roles as spiritual and administrative leaders in local parishes under the Old Regime, Napoleon mandated oaths of loyalty and distributed state salaries to the French clergy to co-opt their talents as bureaucrats and entice them to advocate for the regime on his behalf. While Napoleon remained a skeptic of religion at heart, Machiavelli's argument about the need to appear religious resonated with his desire to expand the state's control over society. Thus, his appeals to France's long-neglected Jewish community acquired

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[200] *General Provisions For All The Protestant Communions* (April 8th, 1802), The Napoleon Series Archive, Waterloo Association. Accessed October 21st, 2023. https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/diplomatic/c_concordat.html.
[201] Ibid.

their financial support for his wars in Europe, while his mandatory vocational training for Protestant priests projected the image of a tolerant ruler sympathetic to various faiths. As a result, the First Consul cultivated the image of a pious leader committed to Catholicism while subordinating sources of dissent.

2.2 Concerning the Secretaries and *Lycées* of Princes

Napoleon's reliance on Machiavelli's philosophies to reform education can be traced to his need for loyal and competent advisors to his regime. In his chapter "Concerning the Secretaries of Princes," Machiavelli emphasized the importance of choosing "capable and faithful" advisors to serve the state, denoting how leaders could judge these qualities via "one test which never fails: when you see the servant thinking more of his own interests than to yours, and seeking inwardly his own profit in everything."[202] To deter servants from deceiving or betraying their leaders, Machiavelli advised that a prince ought to:

> "study [them], honouring [them], enriching [them], doing [them] kindnesses . . . [and] let them see that [they] cannot stand alone so that many honours may not make [them] desire more."[203]

In other words, "secretaries" could be trusted by the state so long as its ruler could fulfill their ambitions for wealth and power.

To ensure his political survival, Napoleon often underscored his desire for the competent and loyal "secretaries" recommended by Machiavelli. As he stated to his wife Josephine in 1804:

> "I will . . . establish a solid government; but I stand in need of good workmen. Among those whom I despise, there are some whose talents I admire, but whose principles I detest. I intend to use them as machines, necessary in erecting and

[202] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 99.
[203] Ibid., 100.

> sustaining the edifice of my power. So long as I am Bonaparte, they were my equals; but become Emperor, I must make them my subjects."[204]

Thus, co-opting former Montagnards and conservative elites of the Old Regime as civil servants proved essential for Napoleon to legitimize his government as "revolutionary" while constructing an ideologically flexible and talented bureaucracy.

By contrast, the efforts of French revolutionaries to recruit capable talent prior to 18 Brumaire proved ineffective due to three key problems with education identified by historians: religious entanglements, ideological inflexibility, and a lack of centralized state funding or management. As historian Timothy Tackett wrote of the Old Regime, "the lack of a standard, institutionalized school system required each family to improvise the schooling of its offspring in accordance with its financial means and geographic location."[205] As a result, local parish priests' control of primary and secondary education, which centered on reading and writing Latin biblical scripture, was reserved almost exclusively for the privileged First and Second Estates.[206] Worse still, many of these teachings became further restricted to satiate the anticlerical campaigns of radical officials during the Committee of Public Safety's tenure (June 1793 - July 1794). Geoffrey Ellis cited the *écoles centrales* instituted by the Directory in February and October 1795 as the first attempt before Napoleon to centralize and standardize education across France. However, the lack of adequate funding and incoherent course syllabi between individual schools undermined the spirit of the program and contributed to existing political dissent prior to 18 Brumaire.[207]

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[204] Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine Bonaparte, quoted in Jeanne Bécu Du Barry et. all, *Courtiers and Favourites of Royalty: Memoirs of the Court of France*, 18.
[205] Tackett, *Priest and Parish*, 72.
[206] Ibid., 73.
[207] Ellis, *Napoleon: Profiles in Power*, 172.

Within the context of Napoleonic France, the First Consul's centralized education system emphasized standardization to ensure students' uniform obedience to the regime. In an unscripted speech circa 1806, Napoleon outlined his goals for the reforms within the context of regime stability:

> "[Education is] the most important of all institutions, since everything depends upon it, the present and future. It is essential that the morals and political ideas of the generation which is now growing up should no longer be dependent on the news of the day or the circumstances of the moment . . . Men already differ enough in their inclinations, their characters and everything that education does not give and cannot reform. . . Let us have a body of doctrine that doesn't vary and a body of teachers that doesn't die."[208]

In short, Napoleonic education served the purpose of training the competent "secretaries" preached by Machiavelli by ensuring French students' morals and political ideas would not stray from service to the First Consul.

Beginning with the Law of 11 Floréal passed in May 1802, Napoleon established the first of forty-five specialized *lycées* across France designed to promote obedience to his regime.[209] Contrary to the disorganization of the Old Regime, students found themselves assigned to a mandatory track of courses from which they could not deviate, each taught by instructors handpicked by Napoleon himself. In 1808, he also reinstated the Old Regime's civil service examinations (known as the *agrégation*) as a required qualification for teachers to project himself as having higher educational standards than his predecessors.[210] As one letter between Napoleon's administrators revealed, "the Latin, and French languages, the first principles of geography, history, and mathematics," served as mandatory subjects for all students, while

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[208] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Noailles, *The Life and Memoirs of Comte Molé*, 63.
[209] Philippe Savoie, *Lycées, lycéens, lycéennes, deux siècles d'histoire* (Paris: Institut national de recherche pédagogique, 2005), 62.
[210] Ellis, *Napoleon: Profiles in Power*, 174.

electives tailored students' talents to the regime's military and bureaucratic needs.[211] On one hand, topics such as rhetoric, logic, and ethics encouraged studies of classical works to train judges and bureaucrats capable of enforcing the Napoleonic Code. Alternatively, courses in science and physics provided context for operating artillery critical to supporting the First Consul's armies in battle.[212] By tailoring curricula to fit the needs of his dictatorship, Napoleon established a system through which to groom France's most talented into Machiavelli's ideal "secretaries": individuals who served Napoleon's policy goals in place of their own.

To this point, Napoleon also tailored his rules of classroom conduct to discipline students as prospective soldiers for military service. In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "That Which Concerns a Prince on the Subject of the Art of War," Machiavelli argued that a ruler who doesn't understand warfare and battle tactics "cannot be respected by his soldiers, nor can he rely on them." To combat this issue, he recommends that a prince never "have out of his thoughts this subject of war, and in peace he should addict himself more to its exercise than in war." Above all else, Machiavelli recommended that leaders such as Napoleon should "keep [their] men well organized and drilled."[213] Within the context of Napoleonic *lycées*, classroom organization tactics prepared all pupils for prospective military service by organizing students into "companies" composed of a sergeant and four corporals; in turn, each of these groups were led by the top student in a given group, who held the title of "sergeant-major."[214] In doing so, Napoleon used his *lycées* to groom sources of army reserves for his wars in Europe, keeping them "well organized and drilled" in the military discipline prescribed by Machiavelli.

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[211] Correspondence from Delambre and Villar, on mission in the Cantal and Allier regions in autumn 1802 to select national students, with Fourcroy, Director of Public Instruction, quoted in Savoie, *Lycées, lycéens, lycéennes, deux siècles d'histoire*, 62.
[212] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 280.
[213] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 63.
[214] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 280.

While Napoleon had returned control of primary education to the French clergy in his 1801 Concordat, he refused to incorporate religious doctrine into the curricula of his *lycées* to ensure his body of loyal students did not succumb to papal influence. Following Antoine Fourcroy's speech proposing a Public Education Bill to extend clerical control over education in March 1806, Napoleon described his stance on the issue as follows:

> "When I am told that priests should remain celibate, I believe it because Mother Church has so ordained and it is our duty to believe it. But as we have no more monks now it is not to my interest, nor is it in my power to restore them. I am bound to fear a single teaching body imbued with religious ideas, and far more in the hands of the Church than in mine. If I wanted to commit the education of the young to religious orders, I would much prefer that there should be several engaged in teaching rather than have but one."[215]

Here, Napoleon reaffirms his acknowledgement of religion as a social unifier in accordance with the "ecclesiastical principalities" described by Machiavelli. Within the context of the broader French education system, however, the First Consul dismissed religion as a subject to prevent France's submission to papal authority. Given the Concordat's success in pacifying France's religious elements, Napoleon could instead focus his *lycées* on acquiring Machiavelli's ideal "secretaries" for his administration.

In terms of administrative function and quality, Napoleon's bureaucracy represented a retreat from revolutionary ideals of liberty in exchange for securing Machiavelli's ideal "secretaries" for his regime. For one, the Conseil d'Etat (Council of State) served as the leading organ within the regime following 18 Brumaire, housing fifty of France's best and brightest, such as foreign minister Charles Tallyrand, Minister of Police Joseph Fouché, and Interior Minister Pierre-Simon Laplace.[216] While this represented a drastic decline from the 6,500

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[215] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Noailles, *The Life and Memoirs of Comte Molé*, 88-89.
[216] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 233-235.

ministers employed by the Directory (1795-1799), Napoleon compensated for the absence of civil servants by creating a new level of *fonctionnaires* to serve as provincial department leaders: the Prefects. Unlike their Roman precursors who could act independently of the state, Bonapartist prefects could only serve as mouthpieces for the state's policies within the regions they administered, while local commune leaders such as mayors were appointed rather than elected.[217] Coupled with the ability to appoint and dismiss members of the Conseil d'Etat via Article 41 of the Consulate's Constitution of the Year VIII, this provided Napoleon with a body of talented "secretaries" dependent upon their loyalty to him for advancement into his inner circle.

Concurrently, this bureaucratic structure also provided Napoleon necessary protection from what Machiavelli called "flatterers." In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "How Flatterers Should be Avoided," he states how these metaphorical yes-men pose a unique problem in deceiving leaders for their own gain by appealing to their ego. Machiavelli further describes how princes cannot openly rebuke flatterers in front of their peers without making themselves seem unapproachable. In response, he argues how rulers:

> "ought to hold a third course in choosing the wise men of his state, and giving them only the liberty of speaking the truth to him, and then only of those things of which he inquires, and of none others; but he ought to question them upon everything and listen to their opinions, and afterwards form his own conclusions."[218]

In this context, the previous example of Fourcroy's bill advocating for clerical authority in education showcased Napoleon's ability to listen to others' counsel while offering his rebuttal to a potentially risky move that could undermine his authority to the papacy's advantage. As a

[217] Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 188.
[218] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 101.

result, the centralized, authoritarian structure of Napoleon's bureaucracy ensured that only talent he could credibly rely on could disagree with him and be funneled into his administration.

However, Napoleon also utilized this funneling of bureaucratic talent for another purpose: to co-opt and promote existing experts from academic communities and local elites to be "capable and faithful" advisors for his regime. For example, Pierre-Simon Laplace, one of the most influential figures of the Society of Arcueil for French scientists and mathematicians, initially served as Minister of the Interior for the Consulate before going on to be appointed a member of the Legion of Honour and receiving the title of count. Similarly, Napoleon promoted the chemist Claude Louis Berhollet, who served with him in the expedition to Egypt in years prior, to the position of Vice President over the French Senate, while also bestowing on him the title of count within the Empire. Even Antoine Fourcroy, the architect of the *lycées* and founder of the École Polytechnique and École de Santé, received the title of count prior to his death in 1809 via imperial decree.[219] Using Machiavelli's advice on the distribution of honors, Napoleon cultivated his image as a meritocratic promoter of overlooked talent to consolidate power by surrounding himself with expert loyalists.

In summary, Machiavelli's doctrines concerning a ruler's need for competent and talented advisors formed the theoretical basis of Napoleon's reforms to the French educational system and dispensing of honors to his regime's bureaucracy. Co-opting the philosopher's conceptions of "secretaries" devoted to the ruler's interests more than their own, Napoleon created forty-five newly-established state secondary schools (or *lycées*) across France with specialized curricula centered on military and civil service. In doing so, the First Consul sought to harness the talents of France's best and brightest into his service as capable bureaucrats,

[219] Ellis, *Napoleon: Profiles in Power*, 176.

judges, and soldiers capable of interpreting and enforcing revolutionary law according to his needs, all while ensuring their loyalty to the regime. In contrast to the ideological persecutions of prior regimes, Napoleon also created a bureaucracy of expert advisors comprising Montagnards and Old Regime elites alike. Building upon Machiavelli's suggestions about the value of awarding honors to entice advisors' loyalty, the First Consul's distribution of the Legion of Honor and noble titles such as "Count" served to make advisors' dependent on the state for promotion and to curb potential dissent. As a result, Napoleon legitimized his government as "revolutionary" by constructing a loyal, ideologically flexible, and talented bureaucracy dependent on his good graces to achieve power and high social status within French society.

2.3 Concerning Liberality and Meanness Towards Taxation, the *Acquéreurs*, and Their Property

In the years leading up to the creation of his civil code in 1804, Napoleon often idealized the notion of creating a simple, centralized, legal framework. In one instance, he declared how he had "dreamed it would be possible to reduce all of law to simple geometric demonstrations, so that whoever could read and write and put two ideas together would be capable of pronouncing it."[220] While Napoleon immediately followed by declaring this point to be "an absurd ideal,"[221] Machiavelli's philosophies endorsed it as necessary with regards to statebuilding. "We have seen . . . how necessary it is for a prince to have foundations well laid," he writes within *The Prince*, "otherwise it follows [by] necessity that he will go to ruin." Machiavelli then argues how "good laws" and "good arms" are the key foundations of any state, stating that since "there cannot be good laws where the state is not well armed, it follows that where they are well armed they have

[220] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, 189.
[221] Ibid.

good laws."[222] Furthermore, his chapter of *The Prince* titled "Concerning Civil Principalities" highlights the challenges faced by the rulers of republican states due to the conflicting interests of its two core classes: the common people and the nobility. Here, Machiavelli argues that a prince "cannot by fair dealing, and without injury to others, satisfy the nobles, but . . . can satisfy the people" by protecting them from their oppression by the rich.[223] Thus, Napoleon could justify his authoritarian approach to domestic rule as necessary to instill equal respect for the law regardless of social class and provide stability thought to be missing from prior revolutionary regimes.

Prior to 18 Brumaire, the French state's failure to adequately supply its people and military frequently undermined the rule of law among the general public. Citing the First Republic's failure to provide the supplies needed to maintain his occupation of Belgium and reports of domestic starvation, General Charles-François Dumouriez plotted to overthrow the Montagnard-dominated National Convention in March 1793. By the end of the month, he declared his intentions in a letter to legislators:

> "Paris is overwhelmed by tyranny, assaults, crimes, anarchy is devouring us . . . it is time for the army to speak up, to purge France of assassins and agitators, and give our unhappy country the peace that it has lost through the crimes of its representatives."[224]

While his attempted coup ultimately failed because his primarily Jacobin troops refused to aid the endeavor, radicals' fears for the safety of the revolution intensified, creating blatant disregard for the law. As Parisian lawyer Adrien-Joseph Colson described on the eve of participating in the anti-government Federalist Revolt later that same year, he felt fury towards Dumouriez's "evil

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[222] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 52.
[223] Ibid., 41-42.
[224] Charles-François Dumouriez, quoted in Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 327.

treachery, so long secretly concealed and plotted both with our external enemies and, as far as we can tell, with a large number of internal conspirators."[225] But the Committee of Public Safety's rule by decree beginning in June 1793 ironically promulgated further violence and instability in the name of restoring order.

Attempts made by the Directory regime (1795-1799) to stabilize France fared no better due to economic turmoil and its inability to assert its authority. For one, the government's devaluation of the *assignat* (the revolution's paper currency backed by material assets seized from the Catholic Church beginning in 1791) sparked public backlash due to the resulting inflation of bread prices and food shortages.[226] Like Dumouriez, Napoleon frequently expressed disgust at the French government's challenges at supplying his army in Italy. In one letter dated March 28th, 1796, Napoleon advised the Directory's leadership to "threaten the contractors, who have robbed much and enjoy credit," to shore up the "wretched state" of his troops.[227] Worse still, the ruling elite's disregard for their constitution's democratic principles made the Directory appear politically unstable for the remainder of its tenure. Capitalizing on the dissent of conservative peasants in the countryside, royalists successfully secured a majority of seats in the Directory's Council of Five-Hundred after winning legislative elections held in April 1797. Fearing another royalist insurrection, leading Director Paul Barras and his liberal allies staged the self-coup of 18 Fructidor in September 1797 to maintain their grip on power. Exploiting articles in the 1795 constitution that allowed them to abolish civil liberties in states of emergency, Barras and his followers invalidated all election results, ordered the arrest of sixty-five royalist leaders, and replaced the vacant seats in the legislature with Thermidorian

[225] Timothy Tackett, *The Glory and the Sorrow: A Parisian and His World in the Age of the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 145.
[226] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 462.
[227] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 79.

loyalists.[228] For Napoleon, Machiavelli's point on the need for "good arms" to enforce "good laws" informed his dismay at the Directory's seeming failure to maintain public order.

To ensure "good arms" for his regime's laws following 18 Brumaire, Napoleon recruited fellow plotter Joseph Fouché as his minister of police to reign in domestic dissent. Power-hungry and opportunistic throughout the revolution, Fouché initially joined the Montagnards in 1793 and quickly established contacts with several royalists despite being a member of the anti-clerical faction. As a result, he amassed and maintained a vast network of spies including "peddlers, butchers, hairdressers, wigmakers, perfumers, . . . Louis XVI's former valet, . . . and the madame of the brothel at No. 133 Palais-Royal" among others.[229] Fearing for his own life following his dismissal from the Jacobin Club in July 1794, he became a leading figure in the plot to overthrow Robespierre later that month. As Fouché described in his memoirs, he warned deputies in the National Convention of a potential purge following Robespierre's calls for more bloodshed on July 26: "I merely said to them . . . 'You are on the list, you are on the list as well as myself; I am certain of it!'"[230] Napoleon soon recognized the value of Fouché's contacts in maintaining his authoritarian rule. As Napoleon stated of him immediately following 18 Brumaire, "Fouché, and Fouché alone is able to conduct the ministry of police. We cannot create such men; we must take what we can find."[231] Within the context of domestic rule, the First Consul's recruiting of Fouché supplied the "good arms" prescribed by Machiavelli to ensure the rule of his "good laws."

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[228] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 485-488.
[229] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 215.
[230] David Andress, *The Terror: The Merciless War for Freedom in Revolutionary France* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 237.
[231] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 215

In terms of "good laws," the Napoleonic Code of 1804 proved to be a massive success in providing a centralized legal framework for the French state. With the assistance of Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, who had been charged since 1792 by prior regimes to overhaul France's laws, Napoleon centralized France's 42 regional codes and the roughly 14,000 decrees passed by all revolutionary regimes since 1789.[232] Contrary to France's 42 conflicting provincial codes under prior regimes, Napoleon provided a single body of law to govern all French citizens emphasizing personal freedom. Aligning his policies with revolutionary ideals, he guaranteed the equality of all Frenchmen under the law, and the abolition of Old Regime privileges such as noble titles, and transferred church control over personal affairs such as marriage and burials to the state. Above all else, however, the First Consul prioritized adult males' ability to freely own property and affirmed equal inheritance among male siblings. Napoleon also permitted his judges to interpret the code to address individual cases, but forbade them from issuing rulings based on legal principles rather than the code's edicts themselves. In doing so, the First Consul prevented the creation of legal precedents that could circumvent his implementation of the code, projecting the image of an inflexible (and stable) body of law.[233]

Here, to understand Napoleon's emphasis on individual ownership and legal equality, we must consider the role of property relations and taxation as the driving force of politics leading up to the French Revolution (1789-1799). From a socioeconomic standpoint, this pre-1789 "Old Regime" consisted of a social hierarchy centered on three classes called "Estates," each conferred with unique powers and or privileges. These groups consisted of the clergy (First Estate), the nobility (Second Estate), and everyone else in French society (Third Estate). These first two classes became highly valuable in their social status due to their exemption from the

[232] Ibid., 275-276.
[233] Ibid., 277.

taille, a general tax levied on the population. Within the Old Regime's feudal economy, aristocrats acted as local landlords who could grant and withhold leases, and demanded portions of the Third Estate's foodstuffs and tax money (dubbed "seigneurial" rights). Thus, whenever King Louis XVI attempted to impose duties on the clergy and aristocracy, local courts charged with administering justice (called *Parlements*) often ruled in their favor on account of falling within the two upper estates' jurisdiction. Consequently, the monarchy also became dependent upon the peasantry for financing because of this dynamic, which, coupled with tithes imposed by the Catholic Church, shifted the tax burden onto the already strained Third Estate.[234]

Machiavelli's emphasis on limiting the number of duties imposed on a ruler's poorest constituents underscored King Louis XVI's dilemma in these last years of the Old Regime. For example, in his chapter of *The Prince* dubbed "Concerning Liberality and Meanness," Machiavelli cautions against a prince developing a reputation for "liberality" (namely, the quality of giving or spending freely). He argues that excessive state spending makes princes "odious to [their] subjects" for "[doing] everything [they] can to get money" to compensate, and that "becoming poor he will be little valued." Therefore, he recommended that a prince:

> "ought not to fear the reputation of being mean,[235] for in time he will come to be more considered than if liberal, seeing that with his economy his revenues are enough, that he can defend himself against all attacks, and is able to engage in enterprises without burdening his people."[236]

In other words, princes must find alternative methods of revenue in times of war or economic hardship to ensure their armies remain well-paid and no excessive tax burdens are placed on their constituents, particularly the aristocracy.

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[234] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 22-23.
[235] To clarify, the phrase "Meanness" is also interpreted as "Miserliness" in some translations of *Il principe*; in either case, Machiavelli emphasizes the need for princes to spend only where necessary to ensure adequate state funding.
[236] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 68.

To combat this "liberality" dilemma, Machiavelli suggests that rulers adopt a flexible personality to outwit dissenters of their taxation policies and scare them into submission. In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "Concerning the Way in Which Princes Should Keep Faith," he argued how princes must be "half beast and half man" to curb dissent, for "one without the other is not durable." When attempting to harness their "beastly" traits, Machiavelli advises rulers:

> "to choose the fox and the lion; because the lion cannot defend himself against snares and the fox cannot defend himself against wolves. Therefore, it is necessary to be a fox to discover the snares and a lion to terrify the wolves."[237]

To be specific, princes must be clever like "foxes" to recognize potential sources of dissent against them and react with the ferocity of "lions" in the event opposition presented itself.

When deciding his approach to taxation, Napoleon took Machiavelli's advice to heart in seeking to avoid making the same political mistakes of his predecessors. Initially, the regime sought to centralize domestic support while resolving the financial crisis left by previous governments by co-opting local elites to finance the *lycées* system. For example, one *lycée* in the town of Grenoble circa April 1803 required a total cost of 75,000 francs to refurbish the building chosen to house it. In response to this sum, the First Consul's officials within the municipality extended a public loan to cover the cost, paid for by local elites' purchases of several 300 franc bonds to pay back the debt.[238] Thus, Napoleon shifted the tax burden onto the local nobility as a helpful alternative to acquire the reputation of "liberality," given his regime's limited income in the immediate years following 18 Brumaire.

However, Napoleon became especially determined to avoid any specific association with the "liberality" of the Old Regime's taxation policies. During an unscripted speech to the Conseil

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[237] Ibid., 75.

[238] Letter from the prefect to the Conseiller d'Etat of Education, 29 Brumaire Year XII (ADI:181M17), quoted in Marie-Cécile Thoral, "Small State, Big City: Involvement of Citizens in Local Government in Nineteenth Century France," quoted in Broers et. al, eds., *The Napoleonic Empire*, 61.

d'État in March 1806, Napoleon justified his decision not to reintroduce the monarchy's duties on salt (the *gabelle*) using the vernacular of *The Prince*:

> "It is being spread abroad that I want to restore the salt tax. You know what a travesty of my intentions that is. I do not wish to restore the salt tax as I think that would serve no useful purpose. If I thought it a useful thing . . . I can assure you I should certainly be bold enough to introduce it . . . I am sometimes fox and sometimes lion. The whole secret of government consists of knowing when to be the one and when the other."[239]

Here, Napoleon places his reading of *The Prince* front and center when making political decisions, citing his need to pivot between the characters of "fox" and "lion" when implementing new taxes on the French people. This reliance on Machiavelli's philosophies also reveals two key revelations about Napoleon's politics and governing style. First, his desire not to impose the *gabelle* implies a concern that his reputation would become "odious" to his people akin to the Bourbon monarchy before him. While the First Consul re-introduced many of the Old Regime's other indirect sales taxes between 1800 and 1804, he did so under new names to avoid direct associations with King Louis XVI's "odious" reputation.[240] Second, his declaration to consider the measure if he "thought it a useful thing" suggests Napoleon's willingness to do so should his spending habits display too much "liberality." Napoleon sought alternative sources of revenue to ensure his troops and officials remained well-paid in spite of the financial burdens imposed on the French state by his wars across Europe.

One source of revenue the First Consul took keen interest in stemmed from the radical Montagnards' use of property seizures to back the revolutionary currency at the expense of Old Regime elites. Following a resolution from the National Assembly in November 1789, church

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[239] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Noailles, *The Life and Memoirs of Comte Molé*, 90.

[240] The other indirect taxes that Napoleon resurrected from the Old Regime included duties on everyday products such as the *Aide* for wine and tobacco. For details, see Bell, *Napoleon: A Concise Biography*, 55.

lands were redistributed among wealthy members of the Third Estate. Backed by this collateral of confiscated lands, the Assembly created a new paper currency, the *assignat*. By doing so, the revolutionary government hoped to stabilize the economic upheaval of abolishing the feudal system by backing their new legal tender with established Old Regime assets. The result of this reform was a tangible currency through which to tax France's population, appraise the value of church lands, and provide the state with immediate revenue to pay off pre-revolution debts.[241]

Revolutionary leaders' conceptions of citizenship challenged the Old Regime elites' right to own property as an excuse for further land seizures. In the wake of increasing political violence leading up to and throughout Robespierre's terror, French aristocrats fleeing abroad (known as *émigrés*) left behind landed estates that revolutionary governments hoped to nationalize to boost the economic value of the *assignat*. Initially, the Assembly's resolutions against *émigrés* and other Old Regime elites opposed to the revolution in June 1791 made them subject to French law irrespective of their physical location. Leaders of the Assembly justified the measure on the grounds that the fleeing members of the upper estates had been citizens who helped create the French national polity and violated their "social contract" to the nation by fleeing abroad. However, with radical Montagnards beginning to dominate the revolutionary legislature, restrictions imposed in October 1792 banned the fleeing aristocrats from returning to France in perpetuity.[242] Likewise, following France's declaration of war against Austria in April earlier that year, the financial burden of the resulting War of the First Coalition (1792-1797) prompted calls for property seizure to compensate the government's losses. The final nail in the coffin for the upper estates' property rights came in March 1793, when the National Convention

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[241] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 188-189.

[242] Jennifer Ngaire Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789–1830* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), 30.

constructed the legal concept of "civil death" to legalize the nationalization of all property from anyone who left France.[243] This conceptualization of death within the national polity soon became a mechanism through which revolutionary governments could strip Frenchmen of citizenship and their property to finance their wars in Europe.

Regarding property rights, Machiavelli cautioned rulers to ensure their subjects remained content. In his chapter of the Prince titled "Concerning Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether it is Better to be Loved Than Feared," he argues how it is safer for princes to be feared because:

> "men have less scruple in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantages; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails."[244]

Machiavelli recommends that in the event a prince needs to persecute dissenters, a prince must have "justification and do it for manifest cause," but must avoid seizing an individual's assets at all costs "because men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony."[245] In other words, princes needed to act with cruelty to inspire loyalty, but must not infringe upon their subject's possessions and inheritances unless a "just cause" presented itself.

In Napoleon's case, attempts to limit the power of local peasant communes and ensure equitable land distributions formed the "just cause" for regulating French property rights. Reflecting on a meeting of the Conseil d'État in March 1806, the Comte Molé recalled Napoleon's stance on the issue as follows:

> "The communes . . . are not property owners in the [individual] sense. There is no property without the right of use and abuse. The communes cannot use their property without my authorization to do so, and it is my duty to prevent them from

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[243] Ibid., 31.
[244] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 72.
[245] Ibid.

> abusing it. They are minors who would squander their fortune and get into debt if a firm and wise tutor did not prevent them."[246]

Here, Napoleon refers to the peasantry in a paternalistic manner, touting himself as the "firm and wise tutor" who can lovingly guide his "minors" within the communes on how to equitably divide property. By doing so, the First Consul implied a "link of obligation" between himself and the French nation while instilling the "dread of punishment" through dictatorial persecution. Moreover, Napoleon provided himself a legal mechanism to enact Machiavelli's advice on fundraising for the French state: seizing dissenters' lands as an alternative to imposing new taxes.

Initially, the Napoleonic Code (1804) built upon the 1801 Concordat's protections by touting the sacredness of landed possessions within French society. As written in Article 544, "Property is the right of enjoying and disposing of things in an absolute manner, provided they are not used in a way prohibited by the laws or statutes."[247] Building upon revolutionary ideas of personal liberty and "natural rights" in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, French citizens remained entitled to the guardianship of land and other possessions unless specific situations warranted restrictions. During the negotiations of his 1801 Concordat with Pope Pius VII, Napoleon recognized the need to secure the *acquéreurs*' gains during the revolution to ensure they remained content. As Article 13 of the Concordat described:

> "His Holiness, in the interest of peace and the happy reestablishment of the Catholic religion, declares that neither he nor his successors will disturb in any manner the purchasers of the alienated ecclesiastical estates, and that, in consequence, the ownership of these same estates, the rights and revenues attached to them, shall be indefeasible in their hands and . . . their assigns."[248]

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[246] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Noailles, *The Life and Memoirs of Comte Molé*, 90.
[247] *The Code Napoleon or The French Civil Code, Literally Translated From the Original and Official Edition, Published at Paris in 1804* (1804; reprint, London: William Benning, Law Bookseller, 1827), 150.
[248] *Convention Between The French Government And His Holiness Pius VII* (1801), The Napoleon Series Archive, Waterloo Association. Accessed October 21st, 2023. https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/government/diplomatic/c_concordat.html.

In doing so, Napoleon permanently secured the land gains of his conservative peasant constituents. However, the Napoleonic regime elaborated upon this definition to expand the French state's power over the individual. Article 545 stated that "No one can be compelled to give up [their] property except for the public good, and for a just and previous indemnity."[249] In addition to providing the French state the power of eminent domain, Napoleon supplied legal protections for peasants whose property was seized from the estates of dissenting aristocrats fleeing Robespierre's terror.

However, the code's legal interpretations of inheritance and ownership provided loopholes for the Napoleonic government to seize assets to deter potential dissent via the concept of civil death. As Articles 22 and 23 describe, individuals convicted of a crime under Napoleonic law and the resulting punishments (including execution) were considered "civilly dead" on account of the state's judgment depriving the guilty party "of all participation in [French] civil rights." However, according to Article 25, "the party condemned loses all property in the goods which [they] possessed . . . [to] inherit any estate, nor transmit by this title, the property which he has acquired in consequence."[250] As a result, individuals could lose the right to property ownership if deemed "dead" in the eyes of Napoleonic courts. Article 725 also declared those who are "civilly dead" to be immediately disqualified from succession to an estate. Article 730 clarifies that "The children of such unworthy persons, coming to the succession in their own right . . . are not excluded by the fault of their father."[251] In other words, the dissenting actions of an individual have no bearing on their families' right to inherit under the law. However, Article

[249] *The Code Napoleon or The French Civil Code, Literally Translated From the Original and Official Edition, Published at Paris in 1804*, 150.
[250] Ibid., 7-8.
[251] Ibid., 198-199.

713 clarified that "property which has no owner belongs to the nation."[252] As the chief representative of the "nation" as First Consul (and later "Emperor of the French"), Napoleon effectively granted himself the legal authority to seize the assets of any dissenters to his regime in the event no relative offered legal challenges.

In summary, Machiavelli's warnings against a ruler's excessive fiscal "liberality" (that is, giving and spending freely) formed the theoretical basis of Napoleon's taxation policies and regulation of property rights within the Napoleonic Code of 1804. Building on the philosopher's advice for ensuring adequate state funding while not appearing greedy, Napoleon refused to reinstate the onerous taxes of the Old Regime while repurposing his predecessors' methods of property seizure to address his fiscal needs. Throughout the French Revolution, Jacobin leaders of the First Republic constructed the legal concept of "civil death" to seize the assets of fleeing aristocrats (or *émigrés*) and redistribute lands owned by the Church under the Old Regime without the consent of either party. Initially, Napoleon affirmed prior redistributions of church lands to wealthy members of the Third Estate (dubbed *acquéreurs*) via the 1801 Concordat. However, the 1804 Napoleonic Code allowed the First Consul to turn his predecessor regime's conception of "civil death" against dissenters by legally sanctioning asset seizure in the event of a Frenchman's disobedience. In doing so, he manipulated property relations as a tool for social control in two ways: offering land as an incentive to support his rule while using seizure as an enforcement mechanism to punish dissenters and repurpose the resulting cash flow to finance his wars across Europe.

[252] Ibid., 195.

2.4 What "Fortune" Effects in a Frenchman's Patriarchal Affairs and How to Withstand Her

In contrast to guarantees of legal equality for men, Napoleon overlooked and actively discouraged women's rights to sustain his power among conservative constituents. In a speech to the Conseil d'Etat circa 1806, he condemned female education as disrupting of the existing social order: "Being educated together, which is good for men, especially teaching them to help each other and preparing them by comradeship for the battle of life, is a school of corruption for women. Men are made for the full glare of life [while] [w]omen are made for the seclusion of family life and to live at home."[253] In other words, Napoleon perceived women's capacity to organize resistance problematic to his rule, prompting conservative social policies to confine them to the domestic sphere. Within the context of Machiavelli's philosophies, however, these policies also pacified Napoleon's conservative male constituency by appealing to their cultural perceptions of women as subordinates. In his chapter of *The Prince* titled "That One Should Avoid Being Despised and Hated," Machiavelli had argued how it made

> "[princes] hated above all things . . . to be a violator of the property and women of his subjects . . . And when neither their property nor their honor is touched, the majority of men live content, and [the prince] has only to contend with the ambition of a few, whom he can curb with ease in many ways."[254]

Therefore, Frenchmens' perceived control over their wives became essential to Napoleon's political survival and encouraged him to preemptively mitigate a potential source of dissent to his rule at the expense of women's rights.

Furthermore, Machiavelli's analogy comparing women to the concept of fortune (or luck) aligned well with Napoleon's patriarchal worldview. In his chapter "What Fortune Can Effect in

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[253] Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in Noailles, *The Life and Memoirs of Comte Molé*, 72.
[254] Machiavelli, *Il principe* (*The Prince*), in *The Prince and Other Writings*, 79.

Human Affairs and How to Withstand Her," Machiavelli emphasized the success of men who act decisively in accordance with their circumstances. To this point, he concluded "that since fortune changes and men remain set in their ways, they will prosper so long as the two are in accord with one another" given that "fortune is a woman, and it is necessary, if you wish to keep her down, to beat her and knock her about" into submission.[255] Here, Machiavelli instills a gendered personification in the concept of "fortune," emphasizing women's power in society due to their constant opposition to men's patriarchal rule. In doing so, he implies two pieces of advice for (predominantly male) princes to secure power within the context of gender roles: women's subordination is necessary and must be actively pursued for one to avoid being deposed.

Napoleon echoed Machiavelli's logic when sharing his thoughts on the role of women in French society. For one, when asked by Madame de Staël in January 1798 who he considered to be the ideal woman, Napoleon responded as follows: "she who has the most children."[256] On the surface, he appeared to fall in line with other revolutionary leaders' desires to pigeonhole women into traditional female roles of homemaking while allowing "passive" citizenship to alleviate dissent. However, where Napoleon differed from other male revolutionary leaders stemmed from his hardline enforcement of these domestic roles. As Emmanuel de Las Cases recalled from St. Helena circa 1816, Napoleon stated:

> "What have you to complain of, ladies? Have we [Frenchmen] not acknowledged that you possess a soul? … You aim at equality, but that is madness: woman is our property, we are not hers . . . your attributes, Ladies, are beauty, grace, fascination; your duties submission and dependence."[257]

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[255] Ibid., 107.
[256] Roberts, *Napoleon: A Life*, 157-158.
[257] Emmanuel-August-Dieudonné de Las Cases, *Journal of the Private Life and Conversations of the Emperor Napoleon at Saint Helena* (London: H. Colburn, 1824), 2:108-111.

By justifying his social control of women on the pretense of making them into male property, Napoleon embraced Machiavelli's conception of traditional gender norms.

However, to fully understand the First Consul's patriarchal approach to social politics, historians' debates concerning women's roles and citizenship during the French Revolution must also be considered. As historians Lynn Hunt and Jennifer Heuer described, notions of citizenship stemmed from unconscious collective understandings of politics "structured by narratives of family relations" used to explain the monarchy's absolute power during the Old Regime.[258] In this context, French kings justified their authority by conceptualizing the nation as a "great family" in need of the care and leadership of a benevolent "*père de la patrie*" (or "father of the country") who held the right to chastise his "children" (the people) by granting or revoking citizenship.[259] As a result, gender discourses formed the backbone of politics within the new French Republic, in which "natural" differences between men and women set the basis for legal distinctions between the two. Notably, Lindsay Parker outlined women's dual role, both as "active" militants of the revolution and as "passive" republican mothers who "demonstrated [their] patriotism by staying at home" to inculcate the next generation with ideals of liberty and equality.[260] Male revolutionary leaders such as Abbé de Sieyes illustrated this paradox while crafting the Constitution of 1789 by distinguishing between "natural and civil rights" possessed by everyone in France (women included) and the "political rights" needed to participate in lawmaking. Following this gendered dichotomy, officials reserved the latter set of rights solely for property-owning males throughout the remainder of the revolution.[261]

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[258] Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), xiii-xiv.
[259] Heuer, *The Family and the Nation,* 17.
[260] Lindsay A. H. Parker, *Writing the Revolution: A French Woman's History in Letters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4-5.
[261] Popkin, *A New World Begins*, 296.

Gendered conceptions of citizenship among the revolutionary leadership offered women additional avenues for state service in spite of their exclusion from the national polity. As historian Jeremy Popkin described, the absorption of Church duties from the Old Regime into the Republic's *état civil* (civil state) became the nexus for women to petition for familial freedoms. The legalization of divorce in 1792 allowed women to retain custody of any children under age seven and mandated both parents' contributions to child support.[262] In other words, French women compensated for the absence of legally sanctioned political participation through independent activism and the politicization of the familial sphere. That being said, gendered distinctions between "active" and "passive" citizenship limited the types of support available to women under the revolutionary government. As Heuer described, "legislators would progressively identify the citizen explicitly with [male dominated] *paterfamilias* and limit . . . women's legal membership in the nation."[263] Fearing female reprisals against this hierarchy, radical legislators instituted a nationwide ban on women's political clubs in October 1793.[264] As the Committee of Public Safety began to consolidate the state's authority, Montagnard deputies expanded familial citizenship metaphors to provide government assistance for women in need by assuming the role of "benevolent fathers." As Josephine Letellier asked the National Convention in February 1794, "can't I pass into your hands the power my father has over me?"[265] To this end, French women played into male leaders' paternalistic notions of citizenship to assert personal autonomy and meet their needs in spite of political restrictions.

Historians have observed a similar trend with French conservatives' retaliation against women's pursuit of property rights. Given the absence of a national civil code prior to 18

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[262] Ibid., 297.
[263] Heuer, *The Family and the Nation*, 13.
[264] Ibid., 50.
[265] Josephine Letellier, quoted in Ibid., 46-47.

Brumaire and regional variance in French property law, female relatives of landholders exploited revolutionary reforms to pursue inheritance claims. With the Law of 17 Nivôse passed in January 1794, radical Montagnards attempted to institute egalitarian inheritance of property for all descendents and collateral relatives regardless of sex. While more liberal regions to the north and west of Paris embraced these changes, conservative provinces such as Normandy pushed back against the ordinances, fearing the collapse of social harmony. As male citizens Lenoir and Lammarré asserted in 1795, the laws tore apart the "tranquility of families" by allowing "the social order [to be] entirely overturned . . . The sister is engaged in open warfare with her brother."[266] Moreover, Normandy's reliance on Roman legal precedents allowing only a designated male heir to inherit familial property resulted in struggles for legal sovereignty with the revolutionary government.[267] As Suzanne Desan observed, women's success in litigation depended on their "combination of rights ideology with a moral discourse on the family" in crafting their inheritance cases. During one hearing in August 1794, divorced father Lemasson attempted to relieve himself of paying his daughter Augustine her mandated pension by arguing that the Nivôse law gave him "free control over his property" and abolished familial obligations. Augustine countered by explaining how she "never refused all the help he demanded from her," which the court endorsed, ruling in her favor.[268] As a result, radicals' disorganized policy execution enabled female relatives to challenge local statutes by playing into gendered conceptions of familial devotion. However, these measures also provoked the ire of conservative men that Machiavelli had warned against, further swaying Napoleon in favor of the patriarchal familial relations outlined in his 1804 law code.

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[266] Suzanne Desan, "'War between Brothers and Sisters': Inheritance Law and Gender Politics in Revolutionary France." *French Historical Studies* 20, no. 4 (1997): 597.
[267] Ibid., 602-603.
[268] Ibid., 617.

Moreover, the Directory regime (1795-1799) signaled a disruption to traditional gender norms, around which Napoleon reactively based his approach to patriarchy. With the social customs of both the Old Regime and the Committee of Public Safety no longer in force, gendered expectations that relegated women to homemaking began to be disregarded altogether. In a letter to his brother Joseph dated July 18th, 1795, Napoleon observed these changes in Parisian women's social roles and their potentially revolutionary power:

> "How is it possible to see the dark side of things when the mind is constantly whirled about in this giddy vortex? Women go everywhere; to the theatres, to the public walks, to the public libraries. You find beauties in the philosopher's study . . . Indeed all men are mad about them; they think only of them and live only for and through them. A woman does not know her value or the extent of her empire, till she has spent six months in Paris."[269]

On the surface, Napoleon appears to be fascinated with female social freedom under the Directory, citing his male peers' obsession over educated women's publicity as evidence of their growing power. However, this fascination is likely the result of fearing a female-dominated society. As a result, Machiavelli's advice on maintaining women's subordination prompted Napoleon to codify his patriarchal creeds in order to restore what he perceived as the "social stability" of traditional gender roles.

From the onset, the Napoleonic Code of 1804 defined citizenship as gendered privileges exclusive to males within French society, irrespective of revolutionary ideals concerning equality. As written in Articles 1 and 2, "the exercise of civil rights is independent of the quality of [citizenship]," which only "Frenchmen" could legally exercise.[270] In other words, Napoleon's regime still legally considered women to be French citizens while denying them the voting rights

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[269] Napoleon Bonaparte to Joseph Bonaparte, 18 July 1795, in Napoléon Bonaparte, *The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph : Selected and Translated, with Explanatory Notes, from the "Mémoires Du Roi Joseph"* (New York, N.Y: D. Appleton and Co., 1856), 16.
[270] *The Code Napoleon or The French Civil Code, Literally Translated From the Original and Official Edition, Published at Paris in 1804*, 3.

their male counterparts enjoyed. Furthermore, the citizenship status of women relied upon the status of their spouse in the eyes of marital laws. Thus, Article 12 clarified that "the foreigner [or woman] who shall have married a Frenchman shall follow the condition of her husband."[271] Article 17 also clarifies that women who marry a foreign citizen legally inherit the citizenship of their husband, with their original French citizenship only returned in the event of the spouses' death.[272] These restrictions, coupled with prevailing definitions of citizenship using male pronouns, codified Napoleon's suppression of women's political participation as law.

Furthermore, the code's legal interpretations of marriage and male "protection" outlined traditional gender roles while paying lip service to revolutionary notions of equality. For one, Articles 212, 213, and 214 defined marriage as "[owing] each other fidelity [and] assistance," in which the "husband owes protection to his wife, [while] the wife owes obedience to her husband." In turn, these edicts limited married women's autonomy, exhorting them to

> "live with her husband, and to follow him to every place where he may judge it convenient to reside" while her spouse "[provided] everything necessary for the [woman's] wants of life."[273]

French husbands' "protection" amounted to stripping their wives of the freedom of movement acquired during the revolution, in contrast to the code's rhetoric of marital "equality."

To close loopholes in provincial law variations, rights gained during the French Revolution such as control within the family sphere, property ownership, and divorce became subject to a uniform set of male privileges. As the section titled "Of Paternal Power" outlined, a child owed "honor and respect to his father and mother," and remained subject to parental control until coming of age; however "the father alone exercises this control in marriage."[274] As

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[271] Ibid., 4.
[272] Ibid., 6.
[273] Ibid., 60.
[274] Ibid., 103.

a result, primary parental control fell to the male partner, restricting women's already limited influence within the family. Similarly, Article 217 specified that women could not "give, alienate, pledge, or acquire [property] by free or chargeable title, without the concurrence of her husband in the act, or his consent in writing."[275] In cases of divorce, Articles 229 and 230 nominally give both husband and women equal right to the practice "on the ground of [their spouse's] adultery." However, the latter edict specified that women must demonstrate that the adulterous spouse "shall have brought his concubine into their common residence first," mandating that proof must be physically presented to the court to issue an annulment.[276] On the surface, Napoleon defined women's role as "equal" in marriage. In reality, Napoleon heeded Machiavelli's advice by giving French men patriarchal control to ensure they "lived content."

In summary, Machiavelli's doctrines concerning a ruler's need to appease male constituents' control over women in society formed the theoretical basis of Napoleon's patriarchal restrictions on women's rights within the Napoleonic Code of 1804. Relying on the philosopher's premise that leaders garner the most hatred from "[violating] the property and women of his subjects," the First Consul secured his popularity among Frenchmen through legal guarantees of patriarchal power.[277] Initially, women exercised socio-political autonomy by playing into the male revolutionary leadership's paternalistic conceptions of citizenship to acquire access to welfare services. Coupled with radicals' egalitarian inheritance policies and provincial variance in local laws, widows and daughters successfully pursued property ownership via court battles against male relatives. In turn, the loosened nature of gender norms under the Directory (1795-1799) provided women an unprecedented freedom of movement that

[275] Ibid., 59.
[276] Ibid., 62-63.
[277] Ibid., 79.

alarmed conservatives seeking a return to traditional female roles. Inspired by these fears and Machiavelli's warnings against female dissent, Napoleon stripped women's ability to own property, seek divorce, and or physically leave their spouses, giving husbands full legal control over their wives. In doing so, he paid lip service to revolutionary ideas of "equality" while imposing his patriarchal outlook on French society.

2.5 Chapter Conclusions

Ultimately, the evidence suggests that Napoleon Bonaparte's domestic agenda relied on Machiavelli's *The Prince* as a direct philosophical framework to establish a stable government and consolidate the First Consul's power over France. Using Machiavelli's specific recommendations on acquiring dictatorial power, Napoleon shaped his domestic policies around four key areas of French society he perceived as unstable due to the chaos of the French Revolution: religion, education, property rights, and gender roles. While prior revolutionary governments such as the Committee of Public Safety (June 1793 - July 1794) and the Directory (1795-1799) attempted to address these core issues, their anticlerical persecutions and lack of centralized state funding or management made any attempts at reform a failure. By contrast, Machiavelli's philosophies allowed Napoleon to bend the French Revolution's ideals of liberty and equality to suit his policy needs. Thus, the seemingly contradictory tensions between progressive and conservative social policies underscored Napoleon's ideological flexibility as a necessary means to ensure his survival in power.

Regarding religion, the First Consul emphasized his reliance on Machiavelli's precepts through his 1801 Concordat with Pope Pius VII. His reinstatement of Catholicism as France's official religion following the church's deposition during Robespierre's terror secured popular

support for his regime from the masses of conservative French peasantry. Likewise, his revival of revolutionary protections for the freedom to worship also garnered the support of religious minorities such as Jews and Protestants. However, Napoleon's limitations on the clergy's power via mandatory oaths of loyalty to his regime, state salaries, and his ability to personally appoint all bishops underscored his need to keep the clergy from organizing parishioners against his rule. In this way, Napoleon acquired the "restorer of religion" moniker as a testament to his reinvention of France as the "ecclesiastical principality" envisioned by Machiavelli: "secure and happy" subjects ruled solely through faith in their God and prince alike.

In turn, Napoleon continued his use of Machiavelli's recommendations through education reforms designed to supply competent and loyal bureaucrats for his regime. Building upon his predecessor's attempt to centralize French education, the First Consul's Law of 11 Floréal in 1802 established forty-five newly-established state secondary schools (or *lycées*) to induct France's most capable soldiers and civil servants into his service. Co-opting Machiavelli's conceptions of a prince's ideal "secretaries," Napoleon channeled France's most competent and talented individuals to serve as capable bureaucrats and judges interpreting and enforcing revolutionary law according to his needs. Using specialized curricula and honorific titles, he instilled potential statesmen and soldiers with fealty to his regime, while providing avenues of social mobility for political rivals, Montagnards, and Old Regime elites alike. In doing so, Napoleon legitimized his government as "revolutionary" by constructing a loyal, ideologically flexible, and talented bureaucracy dependent on his good graces to achieve power and a high social status within French society.

Alternatively, Napoleon's redistribution of church lands to wealthy members of the Third Estate (dubbed *acquéreurs*) and his guarantees of land ownership offered tangible incentives for

supporting his rule. Building on Machiavelli's advice for avoiding public hatred and displaying "liberality" (that is, giving and spending freely) in taxation and fiscal policies, Napoleon aimed to secure property rights while providing legal loopholes to seize individual assets to suit his needs. Initially, revolutionary leaders of the First Republic constructed the legal concept of "civil death" to seize the assets of fleeing aristocrats (or *émigrés*) and redistribute lands owned by the Church under the Old Regime without the consent of either party. However, through the combined legal provisions of the 1801 Concordat and the 1804 Napoleonic Code, the First Consul legitimized the transfers via the papacy's written approval and codified civil death as a method of asset seizure, respectfully. In doing so, Napoleon provided enforcement mechanisms within French law to punish dissenters of his regime with seizure and used the resulting cash flow to finance his various wars across Europe.

Napoleon relied on *The Prince* as an underlying justification for his patriarchal approach to French gender norms. Relying on Machiavelli's premise that leaders garner the most hatred from violating his subjects' women and property, the First Consul focused on securing his popularity among poor Frenchmen through legal guarantees of patriarchal power. Despite male revolutionaries' initial attempts to isolate their female counterparts from the national polity circa 1789, French women exercised socio-political autonomy by playing into paternalistic conceptions of citizenship to acquire access to welfare services. Likewise, Jacobin attempts to enact egalitarian inheritance policies in 1794 coupled with provincial variance in local laws enabled widows and daughters to pursue property ownership by challenging local statutes. The loosened nature of gender norms under the Directory (1795-1799) expanded these loopholes by allowing greater freedom of movement than in prior regimes. However, following the centralization of French law under the Napoleonic Code of 1804, women's ability to own

property and the legal flexibility used to secure it disappeared altogether. Worse still, clauses suppressing female autonomy within marriage such as the inability to divorce or physically leave gave husbands full legal control over their spouses. As a result, Napoleon paid lip service to the revolutionary ideals of “equality” while imposing his patriarchal outlook on French society.

In the end, Machiavelli’s philosophies played a crucial role in the conceptualization and implementation of Napoleon's domestic policies and consolidation of power following 18 Brumaire. These implementations of advice within *The Prince* underscored the successes of the First Consul's political pragmatism in contrast to the failures of prior revolutionary regimes’ overreliance on ideological dogmatism. As a result, Napoleon embodied Machiavelli’s conception of the ideal ruler as the “prince” of the French Revolution.

CONCLUSIONS

Even before Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815, his studies of Machiavelli had begun to shape his reputation among contemporaries. In 1810, British nobleman Sir John Byerley published an annotated translation of *The Prince* showcasing the similarities between Machiavelli's philosophies and Napoleon's actions. Playing on the period's popular perceptions of the philosopher as taboo, Byerley aimed to portray the emperor as a megalomaniacal tyrant while expressing a reserved admiration of his political genius for "invariably pursu[ing] the doctrines of Machiavelli."[278] For example, Byerley characterized Napoleon's adoption of the title "Protector" in his Confederation of the Rhine as a successful check against potential rebellions from the territory's local nobility. In doing so, Napoleon consolidated his imperial rule by forcing these German princes to compete for his favor, preventing them from uniting against him - a tactic advocated by Chapter 2 of *The Prince* concerning the conquest of new territory.[279] Similarly, Austrian minister Clemens von Metternich expressed certainty that "Napoleon deeply admired Machiavelli," for having added the *Discourses on Livy* to his personal library in 1808.[280] For both Byerley and Metternich, Machiavelli's philosophies served as an effective lens through which to assess and attribute the seeming successes of Napoleon's actions.

By contrast, opponents of the Napoleonic regime saw the cynical nature of Machiavelli's works as an effective outlet to criticize the emperor's tyranny. In particular, Madame de Staël

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[278] Sir John Scott Byerley, *The Prince . . . by Machiavelli, to which is prefixed an introduction shewing the close analogy between the principles of Machiavelli and the action of Buonaparte* vii (London, 1810), xv-xxvi, quoted in Broers, et al., eds., *The Napoleonic Empire*, 78-79.
[279] Ibid.
[280] Clemens von Metternich, *Mémoires: documents et écrits divers / laissés par la prince de Metternich*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1881-1884), 282, quoted in Ibid.

took aim at the seeming contradictions of his domestic policies with regards to the ideals of the French Revolution. In her *Considerations sur la Revolution francaise,* she writes:

> "The [answer lies in a] disdain for men, and consequently for all laws, for all study, for all establishments, for all elections, the basis of which is respect for the human race. Bonaparte got drunk on the bad wine of Machiavellianism; in many respects he resembled those Italian tyrants of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and, as he had read very little, in his mind education did not combat his natural disposition. . . ."[281]

An outspoken advocate of women's political freedom during the revolution, de Staël criticizes Napoleon's regime for reversing these advances in his domestic policy. To do so, she likens the French leader's character and dictatorship to the brutish nature of Italian tyrant Cesare Borgia, whom Machiavelli cited as his model for how the ideal "prince" can inspire fear. Regardless of de Staël's personal opinions of Napoleon, the ideas espoused by *The Prince* are omnipresent in how he is perceived by his contemporaries.

As I have argued throughout this work, Machiavelli's philosophies shaped Napoleon's political character and domestic reforms to the French state by legitimizing his dictatorial tactics as necessary tools to establish stable institutions. These implementations of advice within *The Prince* underscored his political evolution from idealistic republican nationalist to a pragmatic state builder bent on securing his rule over France and its client states. Furthermore, historians' underlying perceptions of Napoleon as a "great man" can be considered onerous for one reason beyond being ahistorical: these policy successes were not his work alone. Rather, his relative successes compared to other revolutionary regimes such as the Committee of Public Safety (June 1793 - July 1794) and the Directory (1795-1799) can be attributed to his education on the

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[281] Germaine de Staël, *Considérations sur la Révolution française,* 2nd ed. (Paris: Tallandier, 1983), 421-423.

discursive framework of Machiavelli's ideas. As a result, Napoleon embodied the philosopher's conceptions of the ideal ruler as the "prince" of the French Revolution in reputation and deed.

With regards to his seizure of power, Machiavelli's philosophies offered an insightful explanation of how Napoleon refined his politics and policy goals over time. Initially, childhood reverence of the Corsican independence leader Pasquale Paoli instilled Napoleon with a fierce patriotic sentiment for his homeland. As a result, he emulated his idol and historical generals such as Julius Caesar by pursuing the ideal of a "glorious strongman" who could achieve Corsican independence, as illustrated in his unpublished *Lettres sur la Corse* circa 1788. After discovering Paoli's reading of *The Prince* around the same time, Napoleon also inherited his hero's fascination with Machiavelli's works. Concurrently, the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau taught Napoleon two things that formed the foundation of his views: the value of republican government as an alternative to tyranny of the monarchy and the threat that religion posed to the authority of the state. As a result, Napoleon perceived the French Revolution as an opportunity to implement his views.

His personal fascination with the perspective of the state and its need to assert power prompted Napoleon to write notes on Machiavelli's *The History of Florence* circa 1789. In doing so, he copied passages from the text that offered practical applications for the ideals he inherited from Paoli and Rousseau within the context of medieval Florentine power struggles. For one, the work's discussion of the Venetian diaspora provided Napoleon a reflection of the Corsican independence struggle to which he had pledged himself, prompting his participation in the French Revolution (1789-1799) as an agent of his people's liberation. Second, passages discussing the warring Guelph and Ghibelline factions and their attempts to establish constitutional government in Florence offered Napoleon confirmation of his existing beliefs in

the need for strong, authoritarian leadership to ensure a healthy republic. These views, coupled with the political chaos incited by King Louis XVI's Flight to Varennes (1791) and the Storming of the Tuileries (1792), convinced him of the need for a "glorious strongman" in the face of monarchical weakness. Thus, Machiavelli provided a philosophical justification for Napoleon's ideals to further the state's (or rather, his own) power, with the "unity" and stability of the French republic as his core political goal(s).

In turn, Napoleon began to develop a pragmatic outlook on revolutionary French politics, culminating in his reading of *The Prince* sometime prior to 1795. Upon falling out with Paoli in early 1793, Napoleon abandoned his Corsican patriotism in favor of a pragmatic pursuit of power. To fulfill this desire and embody the "glorious strongman" ideal he developed in his youth, the Corsican embraced ideas reminiscent of Machiavelli's philosophies to address the seeming political instability of the ruling Directory regime (1795-1799). To this end, his appeals to revolutionary ideals of liberty and equality during his Italian campaign (1796-1797) enabled him to claim support for the French government while honing his statecraft through the creation of constitutions for its client states. By doing so, he achieved in French client states what the Directory seemingly could not in France: stable republican governments with moral and physical "unity" reminiscent of the "civil principalities" described within *The Prince*. Ultimately, this pursuit of power culminated in the coup of 18 Brumaire, in which Napoleon established a personal dictatorship to restore the stability and "unity" of France using Machiavelli's principles.

In the wake of 18 Brumaire, Machiavelli's *The Prince* formed the philosophical blueprint for Napoleon's domestic reforms to the French state. Using Machiavelli's recommendations on acquiring dictatorial power, Napoleon shaped his policies around four key areas of French society he perceived as unstable due to the chaos of the French Revolution: religion, education,

property rights, and gender roles. While prior revolutionary governments such as the Committee of Public Safety (June 1793 - July 1794) and the Directory (1795 - 1799) attempted to address these core issues, their anticlerical persecutions and lack of centralized state funding or management made any attempts at reform a failure. By contrast, Machiavelli's philosophies allowed Napoleon to bend the French Revolution's ideals of liberty and equality to suit his policy needs. Thus, the seemingly contradictory tensions between the emperor's progressive and conservative social policies underscored Napoleon's ideological flexibility as a necessary means to ensure his survival.

In the case of religion, the First Consul's 1801 Concordat with Pope Pius VII underscored his reliance on Machiavelli's recommendations within *The Prince*. To secure the support of France's conservative peasantry for his regime, Napoleon reinstated Catholicism as the country's official religion and overturned the Montagnards' unpopular persecutions of the French clergy. Similarly, his revival of revolutionary protections for the freedom to worship garnered the support of religious minorities such as Jews and Protestants. Napoleon's limitations on the clergy's power such as mandatory oaths of loyalty, state salaries, and his ability to personally appoint all bishops also kept the clergy from organizing parishioners against his rule. In doing so, Napoleon acquired the "restorer of religion" moniker, a testament to his reinvention of France as the "ecclesiastical principality" envisioned by Machiavelli: "secure and happy" subjects ruled solely through faith in their God and prince alike.

Napoleon continued this use of Machiavelli's recommendations through education reforms designed to supply competent and loyal bureaucrats for his regime. Building upon the Directory's attempt to centralize French education, Napoleon's Law of 11 Floréal in 1802 established forty-five newly-established state secondary schools (or *lycées*) to recruit France's

most talented soldiers and civil servants into his service. Through specialized curricula and honorific titles such as the Legion of Honor, he tailored French education to suit his bureaucratic and military needs while providing avenues of social mobility for political rivals, former Montagnards, and Old Regime elites alike. By doing so, the First Consul emulated the ideal "secretaries" described by Machiavelli: loyal advisors and soldiers capable of interpreting and enforcing the law solely in accordance with the needs of the Napoleonic regime. In the process, Napoleon also legitimized his government as "revolutionary," by constructing an ideologically flexible bureaucracy dependent on his good graces to attain power and social status.

Alternatively, Napoleon's protection of property rights and redistribution of church lands to wealthy members of the Old Regime's Third Estate (dubbed *acquéreurs*) offered tangible incentives for supporting his rule. Previously, revolutionary leaders of the First Republic constructed the legal concept of "civil death" to seize the assets of fleeing aristocrats (or *émigrés*) and redistribute lands owned by the Church under the Old Regime, without the consent of either party. Using the combined legal provisions of the 1801 Concordat and the 1804 Napoleonic Code, the First Consul legitimized the transfers via the papacy's written approval and codified civil death as a method of asset seizure, respectfully. In doing so, Napoleon took Machiavelli's advice to avoid having a reputation for "liberality" (that is, giving and spending freely) in taxation and fiscal policies. Rather, he provided enforcement mechanisms within French law to punish dissenters of his regime through asset seizure and used the resulting cash flow to finance his various wars across Europe.

Napoleon further relied on *The Prince* as an underlying justification for his patriarchal approach to French gender norms. Prior to 18 Brumaire, French women exercised socio-political autonomy by playing into male revolutionaries' paternalistic conceptions of citizenship to gain

access to welfare services. Using Montagnards' attempts to enact egalitarian inheritance policies in 1794 and provincial variance in laws, widows and daughters successfully pursued property ownership by challenging local statutes. The loosened nature of gender norms under the Directory regime (1795-1799) expanded these loopholes by allowing greater freedom of movement. Viewing these developments as problematic within the context of his patriarchal worldview, Napoleon set about restoring traditional gender norms upon seizing power. Using the centralization of French law under his 1804 Napoleonic Code, the First Consul permitted women's ownership of property, but not without their husbands' consent, and closed the legal loopholes previously used to secure it. Worse still, clauses suppressing female autonomy within marriage such as the inability to divorce or physically leave undesired relationships gave husbands full legal control over their spouses. Napoleon implicitly justified his actions using Machiavelli's gendered conception of "fortune" and advice on how to avoid hatred: leaders who violated their subjects' women and property or failed to enforce traditional gender norms would face deposition. As a result, Napoleon paid lip service to the French Revolution's ideal of "equality" while securing French men's patriarchal power in the name of "social stability."

As I have hinted throughout this work, the French leader's exposure to Machiavelli included other texts besides *The Prince*, as evident by my inclusion of Napoleon's reference to the *Discourses on Livy* and his notes on the *History of Florence*. In a 2006 reprint of Machiavelli's *The Art of War* by Dover Publications, the back matter of the text reads as follows:

> "Florentine statesman, writer, and political theorist, Niccoló Machiavelli (1469-1527) considered *The Art of War* his most important work. Five centuries later, after serving as a guide to Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and countless other

> military leaders, it remains an authoritative treatise on the fundamentals of warfare."[282]

While I have uncovered no evidence that Napoleon read this particular work at the time of writing, the implication that Machiavelli inspired the French leader's renowned military prowess implies a more extensive connection between the two figures beyond the parameters of my analysis. In any case, existing connections between the actions of Napoleon Bonaparte and the philosophies of Niccolò Machiavelli should not be overstated, but remain a subject worthy of further research and debate.

[282] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Dell'arte della guerra* (*The Art of War*), trans. Henry Neville (1521; reprint, Mineola, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2006), back matter.

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