



---

## Virtue in Machiavelli's Political Thought

---

Reza Shakeri

---

Institute of Humanity and Social Studies, Acecr

---

Received: 19 Oct 2011 ; Accepted: 30 Apr 2012

---

**Abstract:** The interpretability of Machiavelli's political thought relates, in the most part, to the concept of virtue and its dimensions. In Western thought, this concept has had continuity and has reached the Renaissance and Machiavelli's times. In the Roman and Medieval tradition, philosophical, verbal, religious and even literary and historical approaches were dominant in the clarification and explanation of this concept. However, with Machiavelli, we witness a break in the sense and status of this concept. By confining the concept of virtue in the realm of politics and releasing it from the bounds of the ancient thought, Machiavelli could delineate a novel but supported view backed by historical evidence and kingship experiences, and provide the prince and government with new operational possibilities. The present paper investigates the process of transformation and formation of the concept of virtue by Machiavelli based on a conceptual framework taken from his and his commentators' works. The results reveal that the new concept of virtue has a qualitative and a quantitative dimension each with certain aspects. Successful political act is actualized through simultaneous consideration of both dimensions of virtue.

**Keywords:** Virtue, Prince, Providence, Politics, Renaissance, Context.

---

### Introduction

Machiavelli is one of the influential intellectuals of modernity and in Strauss's words he is the discoverer of the new politics continent. Much work has been carried out on his thoughts and works, despite this, there is still space to reinterpret his ideas in the light of the newly emerged issues. The interpretability of Machiavelli's political thought, to the major part, relates to the concept of virtue. Virtue has attracted much attention from the commentators and specialists that with no doubt, can be considered a central concept for Machiavelli. His commentators have probed various aspects of his thoughts using different approaches. Philosophical, historical, feminist, and contextual and discourse approaches are only some of

them. The present paper attempts to revisit the concept of virtue on the axis of political science and its major assumptions. The basis of this view is a conceptual model with three components which are derived from Machiavelli's ideas. The reason for this choice is that different facets of virtue can be greatly clarified through an analysis of the relationships among the three components. On the orbit of historical studies, and based on his experience as a politician and a diplomatic missioner, philosophical reflection, and literary and analytical discourse studies, while benefiting from historical repletion of this concept in the tradition of Western thought, Machiavelli brought up a totally distinct view of virtue and attempted to deliver it to the level of political act.

The hypothesis of this study is as follows: Machiavelli, by confining the concept of virtue to the realm of politics, greatly broadened the possibility of action for the king and government. In order to test the hypothesis, first the conceptual framework is explained. Then, the background which impresses the clarification of the issue is presented and finally, various aspects of virtue are explained.

### Conceptual Framework

Part of the reason of the high interpretability of Machiavelli's political thinking centers on the concept of virtue which includes several dimensions namely quantitative, qualitative, technical and instrumental competence, its skill and humanitarian aspects, the relation of virtue to brutality and cruelty, criticism and judgment, confidence and tendency to prodigies, balanced action, flexibility and change as necessary, and etc. A detailed investigation of all these aspects is beyond the scope of the present paper. However, it is possible to present a relatively clear picture of the place of virtue for Machiavelli within this conceptual framework. This framework has three components including: history and its significance, Renaissance and governorship experiences. A symmetric and simultaneous investigation of the three components contributes to the understanding of the dimensions of virtue.

Machiavelli is a thinker to whom history is a dwelling for thinking and conversing with the great people and intellectuals and he has acknowledged this fact. Of course, this is a general characteristic of the Renaissance era and humanist works. Skinner, who has investigated on the position of Machiavelli as a historiographer, notes the humanists' view of history is dependent on two general principles. First, they believed that a historical note, in the first place, must teach historical lessons, and second, the materials should be chosen as to foreground these lessons (Skinner, 2001: 140). Machiavelli, in effect, was inclined to the

second principle which was the aspect of the influence of history on the political act. In other words, historiography to him did not include public and private ethical teachings for people, but in contrast, once it was delivered exclusively to the field of politics and power, it gained value. For this reason, he attempted to find and investigate elements, contents and components that served a more significant role in the political act. It is from this point that the second component becomes important.

To Machiavelli, history was not the accumulator of man's account but it could be a reservoir of patterns for political acts and he mentions the experiences of many great men such as Cyrus the Great, Moses, Romulus and others and closely focuses on the rationale behind their diplomacy. These experiences for Machiavelli are like passing through a mine field where moving on is dangerous and costs one's life. But if performed properly, cautiously and prudently, great success will follow. In this respect, he sees the experiences not against the criteria prevailing at that time, that is, good or evil, but intends taking up or letting go. A king must neither generally mock nor completely turn away. In the light of the knowledge of the secret of power inherent in the relation between throne and fortune, a king uses virtues while sets them aside elsewhere (Strauss, 1995: 275).

Renaissance is the third component of Machiavelli's thought that relates to the important issue of the intellectual break of the Europe from the traditions of the medieval thought, and returns to a glorious bound with the ancient Rome and Greece. Without the assumption of the new breaking from the old, the logic of Machiavelli's modern analysis cannot be understood. Renaissance, generally, is a kind of return to the powers of the Western man which emerged in various forms: artistic, literary, historiography and political act. In Italy, Machiavelli is considered among the leading figures of the new thought and he is often known as a literary and historian humanist (for instance, this

view is seen in Will Durant's *A Story of Civilization*). However, there is no doubt that Machiavelli's political thought is under the influence of humanism. Renaissance has been known as the rebellion of individuals against authoritarianism, pluralism and ascetic life of the middle Ages (Bummer, 2001: 143). The human intended by the new era is a good-natured citizen, thanks to his intellectual and moral abilities, or ruler who lives in one of the European states (Ibid:147). Although in the Renaissance thought, humanism had a broad manifestation in Italy, Germany and France, due to the political conditions of his homeland and his cynicism to human nature, Machiavelli mainly used the renaissance thought to resurrect the power of Italy. That is why some commentators hold that in Machiavelli's thought, country has replaced human and his natural values and that has technicalized the concept of virtue (Durant, 1988, 588 & Strauss, 1995).

## Background

- **Dāriush Āshoori**

In translating the "king" into Persian, Āshoori has realized the significance of virtue and in his introduction to the translation has stated his viewpoint that deserves probing. He has translated Machiavelli's book based on three English texts (Marriot, 1971; Ricci, 1950; Bull, 1975). The second edition by Āshoori is the result of the revision and comparison of a bilingual Italian-English text (Musa, 1964) and the German version of the "king" (Bronikoweski, 1990). In the third edition (2008) of the translation slight modification is seen. The main reason for these editions is related to the translation of the word 'virtue', and the translator's scrutiny in rendering the Persian equivalence is quite evident.

Āshoori has adopted the equivalence based on historical and geographical proper nouns, according to the method of the *Mosāhab Persian Encyclopedia* and by consulting informants of Italian

(Āshoori: 8). The scrutiny by the translator and his specialty in political thought and intellectualism is the reason for his emphasis on the importance of virtue. 'A highly significant point that made me revise this translation, was the perception of the concept of 'virtue' and 'virtuoso' that occurred [to me] as the result of reading 'Machiavelli' by Skinner.' The importance of the word, led the translator to Musa's bilingual text in which he has proposed twelve equivalents for 'virtue'. Among them are volition, oneness, force, virtue (excellence), meritorious, creativity and interaction between the body and the soul (Ibid: 14, 15). In translating the "king" to Persian, Āshoori also consults two German translations of the "king" but after months of searching and asking the Counselor of the Italian Embassy of the time, who was also familiar with Persian literature and language, finally he comes up with the word 'Honar' (art) (16). Mark Musa's emphasis on the creativity, intelligence and innovation as aspects of the concept of virtue, causing the translator to do a search and finally find the equivalent for 'art' in Iranian literary and mystical works such as *Nasihatol-Molook*, *Shāhnāme*, *Marmuzāt-e-Asadi* and *Sa'di* which hinder his understanding of the political centrality of virtue.

- **Skinner**

Skinner is one of the major and close commentators of Machiavelli. In addition to authoring a book on Machiavelli, he has discussed in detail his ideas in two three-volume works 'Visions of Politics' in which he discusses the appearance of new political thoughts. The basis for Skinner's method is the study of understanding the conditions and atmosphere in which Machiavelli's thoughts emerged. Skinner, as Laine notes, sees virtue as a multidimensional quality that makes up an integrated combination. This quality is like the king's scepter and can pave the road to magnificence and glory for him in relation to fortune.

Skinner, by his assertion, has analyzed, understood and clarified Machiavelli's works through the recreation of the intellectual environment and political activities of Machiavelli's times. The intellectual environment comprises Greek, Roman and Renaissance philosophy and Machiavelli's political life in the government/cities of Italy in the early sixteenth century (Skinner, 2001: 17). Skinner's book is compiled in four chapters. Machiavelli's position as a diplomat, stretched through his official political activity as an ambassador. He collected the results of his observations and data achieved through his political mission trips in a volume titled 'Embassies', a book that Machiavelli later used in his two major works 'the king' and "Speeches." Machiavelli as a Counselor to king' is the title of the second chapter of Skinner's book where he has stipulated a form of a new political exhortation based on real-life experiences rather than on a mere historical study. In the third chapter, Machiavelli's philosophical status is discussed and the fourth chapter gives an account of his historiography experience. The linking thread that runs through all the four chapters is the concept of virtue.

From Skinner's perspective, Machiavelli's virtue is totally contextual and with a sound Renaissance historical grasp of the ancient era and Rome he has rightly realized that virtue, as the basis for politics, has been the determinant of the survival, security, freedom and glory of the society. Machiavelli's multifaceted studies, his immediate political experience and then his theoretical reflections as just another phase in the development of his political thought, enables him to establish a firm foundation for the explanation and development of virtue.

- **Vishless**

Since the early years of the twenty-first century, disciplinary approaches have been replaced by interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary ones. Soon, the same process was also manifested with Ma-

chiavelli's thoughts. Patricia Vishless' book is a volume of his collected papers on Machiavelli's thoughts and works and is a perfect exemplar of the interdisciplinary approach. Vishless, the editor of this collection, holds that the sexuality/gender analysis which is one the strengths of his theories, is well applicable to Machiavelli today and through this analysis the role and position of masculinity and femininity could be implied (Vishless, 2007: x). In Vishless' view, a sound and correct understanding of Machiavelli's thoughts, particularly the central concepts of virtue and providence, and of power and freedom, is essentially interdisciplinary. Machiavelli should be studied under the achievements of political science, philosophy, history, literature, linguistics, play and literary criticism (Ibid: ix). His book is compiled on the axis of government, society and thematic classification of reception in Machiavelli's works. The third domain means that Machiavelli had been seeking to influence and delve into those properties and forces that impacted the process of shaping the society. Machiavelli is the pungent critic of society and this aspect of his thought has had great influence on the Anglo-Saxon world and American literary traditions in the twentieth century (Ibid, xi, x). From this vantage, there is an emphasis on the influence of Machiavelli's works through their literary quality. The king overflows with such characteristics. In this regard, the paper 'Machiavelli: king as a Literary Text' is interesting and reading-worthy (Ibid, 43).

The feministic analysis presented in this book in relation to virtue and its relation with providence is significant. With this view, Machiavelli sees success, influence and achievement in the realm of power and sovereignty as dependent on understanding the fortune and the throne (virtue and providence). Virtue is only half of the success, the other being controlled by fortune, the achievement of which should be accompanied by prudence.

- **Strauss**

Strauss recognizes Machiavelli as the founder of the new political philosophy and equates this with complete severance of the old thought. In the classical political philosophy, virtue was the indicative of the public goodness, but in Machiavelli's thinking public goodness bounds to virtue. Public goodness has objectives such as freedom, stability, and governance of law, prosperity, glory and governance that are practically pursued by all societies (Strauss, 1995: 51). It is with this definition that technical and strategic thinking comes in. In the new Machiavellian thought influenced by humanistic anthropology, human possesses high flexibility power, egoism and overindulgence. However, all of these may be managed and trained. Virtuous king is such a trained human being. He builds himself and the society (Ibid: 52). This conception of Machiavelli by Strauss demonstrates how extended and complete possibilities come to the control of the king to organize the society. These possibilities are tantamount to virtues. For Strauss, virtue is an array of material instruments and managerial/strategic techniques. In classical political philosophy, providence to some degrees was considered beyond the control of the king and if the favorable preconditions-e.g. virtuous and good citizens-were not met, he would fail to embrace success. In contrast, from Machiavelli's perspective, destiny becomes fortune and is clasped by king's prudence power.

### **The Historical, Political and Intellectual Backgrounds of Machiavelli's Political Thought**

William T. Bloom believes that Machiavelli's exploration into the modern political theory was the result of three simultaneous failures. Machiavelli was unsuccessful in his private life, the church declined to the abyss of wretchedness and Italy underwent internal struggles and was disintegrated (Bloom, 2001: 21). In the Machiavelli's youth, Lorenzo Medici was a powerful ruler in Florence and was considered an obstinate advo-

cate of humanists. He supported humanists like Pico, Michael Angelo, Poliziano, and Polci (Priestley). Humanists believed that all the branches of science (knowledge) be revived. Therefore, they supported scientists, artists, poets and experts. However, the Italian society was politically undergoing disintegration. The church was declining and consequently there was no central government in the country to unify it. Italian states and cities were governed independently and separately as a result of this situation and had strong disintegrative competitions. The aristocrats were pursuing their own interests on every corner. Machiavelli himself complains about the situation in the last chapter of the "Prince": "Is not today in Italy the times welcoming the steps of a new king and is not any condition ready to offer an artist and wise man a chance to shape the country so that it becomes a cause of proudness of all the people of this land?" (Machiavelli, 2003: 146). Machiavelli's language towards the aristocrats indicates disgust and pessimism. They were a plundering class with only infinitesimal knowledge of the original and national governance that could guard national unity (Chisholm, 2010: 3). On the other hand, the powerful kingdoms of France and Spain took advantage from this lack of power through venturing. One of the contextual factors influencing Machiavelli's political thought was his experiences during his official political activities. He served as a diplomat for years. In Skinner's view, this political position of him was impressed by the grounds created through the humanists' activities. The humanists had created specific culture and conditions where meritorious and competent individuals would naturally be led to the mainstreams of affairs. Culturally, humanism in Italy meant widespread beliefs such as serving the homeland, caring for public goodness, avoiding and fighting corruption and tyranny, fighting to reach glory and greatness of the homeland (Skinner, 2001: 20). Machiavelli grew throughout his adolescence and youth in the

schools and academies in such an atmosphere. To humanists, the study of history was morally invaluable. Even as a diplomat, Machiavelli continued to study the accounts of the Rome and ancient states and documented his political experiences. His position as the Secretary to the Second Chancery of the Republic of Florence, his diplomatic mission in the court of France, his missions as the Florence delegate in negotiating to Borgia and to the Papacy in Rome were among his official positions. He has documented his observations in two volumes 'Correspondences' and 'Embassies'. In addition, the "king" also contains many expressions of his observations.

In general, the political experience, intellectual activity and historical conditions of the Italian society caused Machiavelli to seek a new path which is the modern political theory and the establishment of modern political science. The core of this theory is the concept of virtue.

### Conceptual Dimensions of Virtue

Now, given the conceptual framework, Machiavelli's works and the background of the issue, it is possible to investigate the dimensions of virtue. There are broadly two dimensions of virtue: the quantitative and the qualitative. The quantitative dimension encompasses the instrumental, technical, skill aspects and in general, the natural and physical power of virtue. On the other hand, the qualitative dimension contains the semantic, theoretical and humanistic aspects. The successful king or government, the one possessing *Virtuoso*, in Machiavelli's view is the one who/which establishes the relation between the two aspects as most closely as possible.

#### ✓ The Quantitative Aspect

This aspect of virtue can be thought of as comprising the concept of civil power. Power is interpreted at various planes, but in the First-Wave modernity that began with Machiavelli, power is

mainly taken instrumentally and technically, and Strauss, also, emphasizes on this fact. Power in the sense of physical strength includes cruelty and suppression. Another aspect of the quantitative dimension is its instrumental feature, that is, virtue as an instrument employed to serve the goals of the king. The other aspect of this dimension is the skill feature; the king's skill in adjusting politics and his own manners. Virtue, meaning physical strength, or the physical aspect in Machiavelli's view, stands at a low degree of significance. It is true that physical power is important to the king—at least in the citizens' view—but immediately the use of this physical power is revised and the physical power principle becomes the second priority. In chapter 6 of the *King*, physical strength is not the preserve of strong arms. But it is the dexterous use of things with hands that gains significance (Laine, 2008:8).

Virtue, in the instrumental sense, acquires a mediation state. That is, a sort of instrument which is of no value per se, but the value is the extent and type of mediation; a medium that could serve another value. Izaya Berlin and Skinner both point out this aspect of virtue. Berlin asserts that in the instrumental view, the characteristics and features of virtue practically lead to the formation of a certain type of class for political power. This class, formed on the basis of virtue, gains properties such as chivalry, intelligence, talent, opportunity – making power and using tools (Berlin, 2006: 24). Berlin's indicates that in the new Machiavellian politics, instrumental virtue shifts king's humanistic traits from the person to organization. Thus, the organization recedes from the reason of nature and moves closer to human identity. On the instrumental aspect of virtue, Skinner points to its condensed energy to guard freedom. He notes of this aspect in the section on Machiavelli's chancery counsellorship where he is viewed as the philosopher of freedom (Skinner, 2002: 209).

The skilled aspect of virtue deals with the harmonization between body and soul as embodied in

the king's will directed towards his action, and the political act itself should be performed rapidly and decisively. Of course, this aspect being the result of the king's personal characteristics, particularly during the military service through militarization power, can at first lead to the achievement of power, but it is not necessarily accompanied by success and glory. Machiavelli's intended example is presented in chapter 6 of the king". Here, virtue only possesses the skill aspect; "Agathocles once stepped the oratory position of Cirakos and decided to become a king. ... one day, he gathered the people and the senate of the city under the pretext of discussing some affairs of the state, and then, to his signal the soldiers massacred the senators and the citizens and he thus, became the king of the city (Machiavelli, 1995:13). In this example, Machiavelli criticizes the skill virtue in which the qualitative aspect is overlooked.

Explanations and reviews of Machiavelli in terms of the quantitative aspect point to the fact that virtue may not ultimately be doomed to consistency, or to be original. In this respect, Machiavelli presents criteria external to human being (nature and religion) which are always consistent. Nature and religion prescribe fixed and unchangeable principles and could not always contain useful virtue.

### ✓ The Qualitative Aspect

This dimension of virtue, in fact, opens the door into the human world and its possibilities, to politics. Put in other words, qualitative virtue is the binding between man and politics, and human traits and characteristics gain an important position in the politics. Political act springs no longer from fixed eternal principles but from such human characteristics as capacity, civility, flexibility, cruelty, strength, tenderness, optimism, pessimism, discrimination, balance, wisdom etc. that will fully be manifested in politics and will ensure success. The basis for the qualitative aspect of virtue

lies in preparedness for change. Pointing to this, Skinner sees virtue as a set of qualities, and the most important aspect of Machiavelli's political thought. This set of qualities enables the king to overcome the temptations of fortune, and consequently, to reach glory and greatness. The real king should focus on his intended virtue and this could not be found on a traditional list of fixed external virtues. This virtue is not achieved but through harnessing providence (Skinner, 2002: 147).

Qualitative-ness as opposed to quantitative-ness, gives the idea to the king that he needs to have a sound diagnosis. Thus, it is prior to the qualitative aspect of virtue. The king should possess a kind of consciousness and insight which may be called wisdom. The king is, constantly, in the complicated situation of making the right choice. He needs to have a discrimination power emanating from his wisdom. The wisdom is of strategic, persuasive, ceremonial and even artistic and literary qualities. Machiavelli asserts this in the 'offering' of the king.

In addition to the humanistic aspect, the qualitative dimension includes two other significant aspects that take the highest degree of the king's efforts; the relationship between throne and fortune (virtue and providence) and economy and cruelty. The former is focused by Skinner and the latter discussed by Laine. An analysis of the relationship between virtue and fortune is rather complex. Fortune in the renaissance, medieval and roman literature is depicted as a lady who only condescends to a man with *Arte*. *Arte* is defined as true art, virtue or chivalry and virility. Skinner's contextual research on Machiavelli pinpoints that Titus Levi's 'History', which was the basis of Machiavelli's "Speeches", has regarded fortune as a female figure with superior goddess power that plays a part in humanistic affairs. The writers and historians contemporary to Levi believed that the ruling prince has to strive to determine the limits of fortune in order to correctly understand and

consolidate his/her own position. This view was based on principles outside the sphere of politics and human, i.e. nature and/or religion. In this field, the power of providence as well is attributed to god (Skinner, 2002: 28). Machiavelli, with reference to the ancient discourse, raised the issue of providence and power by making reference to the nature in order to highlight the complexity of the challenge of virtue with nature. Providence is as a devastating hurricane as if it were caused by the nature and the will of gods. To stand against this hurricane, the king needs to possess qualitative virtue which contains complete consistency and internal coherence. Ability, capability and capacity are characteristics to this consistency resulting in resistance against and overcoming providence (Laine, 2008:12). By reference to this, Skinner stresses capability as a potential concept of developable virtue and it may, proportionately to times, situation and possibilities (quantitative aspect) provide the king with more options. In this way, in challenging fortune, human possibilities are discovered in the face of it and the result of this process is virtue, and the qualifier of the king is *Virtuoso*. Skinner believes that in Rome, to which Machiavelli makes reference, the analysis of virtue is complex. Hannibal warns against the unleashed power of fortune. Fortune should not be relied on to upright the body so that if it changes its back on us, will overthrow us hard (Skinner, 2001: 54).

In one feminist view, pessimism to fortune, called lady fortune, is replaced by optimism and the king is demanded to use lady fortune with appropriate virtue. In this interpretation, virtue means taking into account both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions at the same time, the other name for it being equivalent to lion and fox (Vishles, 2007: 2). The logic of fortune is that of a roaring river. The virtuous king, while understanding the logic, should harness the fortune using his prudence and astuteness; he should dam, branch

and channel the stream of the river into appropriate directions (Kocic, 1998: 49).

The other significant aspect of virtue that has been presented with a new interpretation is the economy of cruelty. In case of Agathocles who reached the kingship through utter cruelty, it was mentioned that Machiavelli has a vigorous criticism toward it and does not consider it as the cause of glory and greatness. People only panic this type of virtue. However, the king should offer fear and hope concomitantly. In discussing cruelty and its permissibility, Laine uses the term "economy of cruelty". Cruelty in politics is along the path of acquiring, preserving and augmenting power and it should be limited as such. The purposefulness of cruelty should economize it in the political act (Skinner, 2001: 102). Within this context, virtue is the utilization of the minimum condition necessary for the efficiency of power. Machiavelli rejects both beastliness barbaric cruelty and the necessity for it. He stresses the instrumental aspect of beastliness and means a sparing use thereof. Only the cruelty and beastliness are acceptable that are used quite effectively per case and of course, without any inherent necessity. There should be no insistence on using cruelty, but at the same time, it should bring about maximum interest. In this sense, virtue is the economization of cruelty which is normative (Chisholm, 2010 : 4). Deliberation, cautiousness and judiciousness are factors to reach the economy of cruelty. Machiavelli' in Chapter 16 of the king notes "Virtuoso governor will always take degrees of caution as to avoid whatever which is the cause for being abhorred." (Skinner, 2001: 80).

## Conclusion

Virtue, in an absolute state, is related to the characteristic of ethical personality; what kind of persons we are, how much correspondence and harmony exists between our actions and words, and how far is this consistency in view and action?



Machiavelli moves away from this absolute definition and sets out to analyze it (Denkis, 2001). The prominence and originality of politics is the underlying assumption of his analysis of virtue and within this framework he seeks to further develop the possibilities of the new king—which are the same as the context of the modern politics. After around two decades of serious political activities as a king counselor and diplomat, Machiavelli came to the conclusion that he has to open a new horizon in understanding politics. His aim was not to discover the regularities of politics, but rather to discover the possibilities and opportunities in front of the king. A disregard of law which is of natural stability and essence drew his attention to virtue. Virtue, unlike law, principle or regulation is based on politics, change and particularly preparedness to make a change on the part of the king. Virtue sets aside the standards and ISOs which are fixed and eternal, and seeks possibilities. This does not mean anarchy but refers to the independence of politics against external constants. And of course, it has limitations of its own (Chisholm, Ibid: 19).

The lion and fox equity stressed by commentators of Machiavelli's thoughts, which are relied on in daily political analysis, is significant in understanding virtue and its bi-dimensional state. Virtue is not like a natural gift or a favor endowed by nature, religion or gods, but it is achieved in the light of diligence, wisdom and in-time action of the king and in this way the virtuoso governor is created. Through a completely new analysis broken from the medieval tradition, but at the same time supported with historical sources and actual governorship experiences, Machiavelli could give a determining centrality to virtue and find the modern political theory. His analyses immediately influenced a part of Hobs' theory and merged into the continuous stream of the political thought of the Occident.

## References

Berlin, Isaiah (2006) *Seresht-e Talkh-e Bashar (The Bitter Nature of Man)*, Translated by Sazgar, Leila, Tehran: Ghoghnoos Publisaher.

Bloom, William T. (1994) *Nazariah hay-e Nezam-e Siasi (Theories of the First-wave Political System)*. Translated by Taddayon Ahmad. Tehran: Aran Publication.

Bummer, Franklin Loofar (2001) *Jarayanhay-e Bozorg Dar Tarikh-e Andishe -e Gharb (Mainstreams in the History of Western Thought)*, Translated by Bashiriye, Hossein. Tehran: Markaz-e bazshenasi-e Iran va Islam.

Chisholm, Robert (2010) *The Ferocious morality of Niccolo Machiavelli*, in: [www.iea.usp.br/englishes](http://www.iea.usp.br/englishes).

Donskis, Leonidas (2001) *Niccolo Machiavelli; Power, Art, Virtue*, Amsterdam Rodopi.

Durant, Will and Ariel (1989) *Tarikh-e Tamadon; Asr-e Ronesans (the Story of Civilization; the Renaissance Era)* vol. 5, Taghizadeh, Safdar and Saremi, Abootaleb. Tehran: Elmi-va-Farhangi Publication.

Kocic, Robert (1998) *Machiavelli Redeemed*, Associated University Press

Machiavelli, Niccolo(2008) *Prince*. New York: Bantam Pub.

Laine, Timo (2008) *the concept of Virtue in Machiavelli*, Nowhere.

Priestly, J. B. (1993). *Seiry dar Adabiat-e Gharb (An Exploration in the Western Literature)*. Yunessi, Ibrahim translator, Tehran: Amir Kabir Publishers.

Skinner, Quentin (2001) *Machiavelli*, Translated by Fooladvand, Ezatollah. Tehran, Tarh-e-no publisher.

(2002) *Visions of Politics, Volume 1*, Cambridge University Press.

(2002) *Visions of Politics, Volume 2 Renaissance Virtue*, Cambridge University Press

Strauss, Leo (1995) *Falsafeh-e Siasi Chist? (What is Political Philosophy?)*. Translated by Rajayi Farhang. Tehran, Elmi-va-Farhangi Publication.

(1996) *Hoghoogh-e Tabiee va Tarikh* (Natural Rights and History). Translated by Parham Bagher. Tehran: Agah-e-Dovom Publisher.

Vishless, Patricia and Seaman, Gerald (2000) *Seeking Real Truths: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Machiavelli*, Brill Netherland

**Reza Shakeri**

Has PhD in Political Philosophy from Institute of Humanity and Cultural Studies and is Researcher for Institute of Humanity and Social Studies, Acecr.

