

Brazil when reading Machiavelli: notes on the first Brazilian edition of *The Prince*, translated by Elias Davidovich

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Abstract

The study of the Brazilian response to Machiavelli's books and ideas reveals that *The Prince* was published for the first time only in the 1930s in the Portuguese-speaking countries. Nevertheless, since the 16th century in Europe, and despite the fact that it had been listed in 1559 in the *Index* of prohibited books, the work was being published and circulated in several ways. Far from taking advantage of the possibility of doing justice, almost four centuries later, to the founder of the modern political science, the translation of 1933, published by the Calvino Filho publishing house, in Rio de Janeiro, is introduced by a preface written by Mauricio Medeiros. Although politically engaged in the fight for freedom and against the authoritarianism of Getúlio Vargas, his preface, if analyzed from a paratextual perspective, seems meant to reaffirm, in the 20th century, the traditional interpretation of the Machiavellian work done by the (not strictly libertarian) Portuguese inquisitors at linguistic and lexicographic levels.

Keywords: Machiavelli; *The prince*; Brazilian translation.

O Brasil na hora de ler Maquiavel: notas sobre a primeira edição brasileira d'O príncipe, traduzido por Elias Davidovich

Resumo

O estudo da recepção das obras e ideias de Maquiavel no Brasil revela que, somente na década de 1930, foi publicado, pela primeira vez no âmbito da lusofonia, *O príncipe*. No entanto, desde o Quinhentos, na Europa, e apesar de sua inserção em 1559 no *Index* dos livros proibidos, a obra vinha sendo publicada e circulava de várias maneiras. Longe de aproveitar-se da possibilidade de fazer jus — depois de quase quatro séculos — ao fundador da ciência política moderna, a tradução de 1933, proposta pela editora carioca Calvino Filho, é apresentada por um prefácio de Mauricio de Medeiros. Mesmo engajado na luta para a liberdade e contra o autoritarismo de Getúlio Vargas, seu prefácio, analisado pelo viés paratextual, revela-se destinado a reafirmar, ainda no século XX, a tradicional interpretação da obra maquiaveliana, imposta, a partir dos níveis linguístico e lexicográfico, pelos (não propriamente libertários) inquisidores portugueses.

Palavras-chave: Maquiavel; *O príncipe*; tradução brasileira.

Brasil al leer a Maquiavelo: notas acerca de la primera edición brasileña de El príncipe, traducido por Elias Davidovich

Resumen

El estudio de la respuesta a las obras y las ideas de Maquiavelo en Brasil revela que apenas en la década de 1930 se publicó *El príncipe* por primera vez en el ámbito de la lusofonia. Sin embargo, desde el siglo XVI, en Europa, y aunque fue incluida en 1559 en el *Index* de los libros prohibidos, la obra se había publicado y circulaba de muchas maneras. Lejos de aprovechar la oportunidad de hacer justicia — tras casi cuatro siglos — al fundador de la ciencia política moderna, la traducción de 1933, publicada por la editorial Calvino Filho, de Rio de Janeiro, es introducida por un prólogo de Mauricio de Medeiros. Aunque está involucrado en la lucha por la libertad y contra el autoritarismo de Getúlio Vargas, su prefacio, analizado por la perspectiva paratextual, revela la intención de reafirmar, incluso en el siglo XX, la interpretación tradicional de la obra maquiaveliana que se impuso desde los niveles lingüístico y lexicográfico por los (no exactamente libertarios) inquisidores portugueses.

Palabras clave: Maquiavelo; *El príncipe*; traducción brasileña.

Brésil au moment de lire Machiavel: notes sur la première édition brésilienne de Le prince, traduit par Elias Davidovich

Résumé

Lorsque l'on examine la réception des ouvrages et des idées de Machiavel au Brésil, on remarque que *Le prince* n'a été publié que dans les années 1930 dans la domaine de la lusophonie. Toutefois, depuis *Le Cinq Cents*, en Europe, et malgré sa insertion à l'index d'ouvrages interdits dans 1559, le texte était publié et circulait de nombreuses manières. La traduction de 1933, proposée par la maison d'édition Calvino Filho — sans faire honneur, après près de quatre siècles, au fondateur de la science politique moderne — a été présentée avec la préface de Mauricio de Medeiros. Même engagée dans le combat pour la liberté et contre l'autoritarisme de Getúlio Vargas, la préface, en se fondant sur biais para-textuel, vise à réaffirmer l'interprétation traditionnelle de l'œuvre de Machiavel même au XX^{ème} siècle; une interprétation imposée par inquisiteurs portugais — pas exactement libertariens — partant des niveaux linguistique et lexicographique.

Mots clés: Machiavel; *Le prince*; traduction brésilienne.

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The question of Machiavelli

There are many events celebrating at the international level the fifth centenary of the original composition of a classic,¹ *The Prince*, by the Florentine author Niccolò Machiavelli, whose entire work was listed in the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, both Roman and Portuguese, during the 16th century.² However, increasingly comprehensive studies show that, even if forbidden and stigmatized for a long time, the Machiavellian work soon started to be translated and published, thus circulating in various forms in Europe.³

But when did *The prince* start to circulate in Brazil and in which ways? When was the book fully translated and first published in Portuguese? Considering some international researches that allow us to reconstruct, by examining the many and varied European realities, an increasingly complex map of the different Machiavellianisms,⁴ are there elements to address the existence of a specifically “Brazilian” “Machiavellianism”? Finally, would it be possible to find out until when Brazil remained, within its most representative *intelligentsia*, on the trails of a traditional interpretation, derived from the Portuguese Inquisition heritage, for the so-called “*questione del Machiavelli*”, as put in the famous words of Benedetto Croce?⁵ This issue was highlighted by the Italian philosopher in 1949 as follows:

Ho avuto occasione di leggere in questi ultimi anni parecchi libri, italiani e stranieri sul Machiavelli; e, ricercando l'intima ragione dello scontento, che mi avevano lasciato, l'ho ritrovata, come in altri casi simili o analoghi, nella deficienza o nell'insufficienza di logica speculativa con cui vi era stato trattato il relativo problema, o «questione del Machiavelli» la quale non è, come si crede, una questione di morale, ma di filosofia della morale, e, come di natura filosofica, richiede quella logica.⁶

Now, it is not easy to understand if, among the “many books, Italian and foreign” mentioned by Croce when writing about the “insufficiency of speculative logic” in dealing with “the question of Machiavelli”; there would also be some material in Portuguese, or connected in a certain way to the

¹Federico Chabod, “La genesi del ‘Principe’”, in: _____, *Scritti su Machiavelli*, Torino, Einaudi, 1964, p. 34.

²Rodolfo De Mattei, *Dal premachiavellismo all'antimachiavellismo*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1969, p. 223 et seq.

³See Rodrigo Bentes Monteiro; Sandra Bagno (eds.), *Maquiavel no Brasil. Dos descobrimentos ao século XXI*. Rio de Janeiro, Editora FGV; Faperj, no prelo.

⁴For an essential and updated bibliography of Machiavelli and the Machiavellianisms, consult Alessandro Campi (ed.), *Il principe di Niccolò Machiavelli e il suo tempo 1513-2013*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 2013.

⁵See Rodrigo Bentes Monteiro; Sandra Bagno, *op cit.* “Questão do Maquiavel” (translated by the author).

⁶“I had the opportunity to read many books, Italian and foreign, about Machiavelli in recent years, and, seeking the deep reason of the discontent that they provoked in me, I have found it, as in other similar or analogous cases, in the deficiency or insufficiency of speculative logic with which they addressed the relative problem, or ‘question of Machiavelli’, which is not, as is believed, a matter of morality, but of moral philosophy, and, being of a philosophical nature, imposes that logic” (translated from Portuguese). Benedetto Croce, “Una questione che forse non si chiuderà mai. La questione del Machiavelli”, *Quaderni della ‘Critica’*, n. 14, Jul. 1949, p. 1. Available from: <<http://ojs.uniroma1.it/index.php/quadernidellacritica/article/view/1938/1935>>. Accessed on: July 12, 2013.

Lusophone cultures. However, we know that one of the earliest and most radical detractors of the Machiavellian work in Portugal during the 16th century was Bishop Jerónimo Osório,⁷ and the interpretation of inquisitorial origin of the work of the Florentine secretary would be deep-rooted in Lusophony, as can be inferred from the analysis of Portuguese dictionaries, and remains unchanged until the 20th century.⁸ With the semantic-lexical linguistic approach being essential to reconstruct a possible profile of Machiavellianism in Brazil, we have conducted some studies on the definitions of words derived from the noun “Machiavelli” recorded by dictionaries throughout the centuries. Even if the word “*maquiaveliano*” has been accepted for decades in Brazilian Portuguese, used with clearly denotative meanings (i.e., free from bias), it hardly appears in dictionaries. Therefore, even today, only entries with derogatory meanings are registered in general.⁹ What would, then, be the consequences of this lexical-semantic conditioning, especially in prefaces and commentaries of the Brazilian translations of *The Prince*?

Before we try to answer these questions, let us consider the reasons why Croce talks about a “deep reason” for “discontent” when reading “many books, Italian and foreign” about Machiavelli. The Italian philosopher says:

So bene che al Machiavelli è stata negata la qualità di filosofo e si è sorriso di coloro che vogliono farlo filosoficamente parlare, e la sua importanza è stata riposta in altre cose, tra le quali c'è una che si suole ancora ripetere ma che confesso di non intendere; cioè, che egli non fece altro che mettere in iscritto quello che era il costume dell'età sua. Un amanuense o un echeggiatore mi pare che non solo non sia un pensatore, ma neppure uno scrittore che, per essere interprete di una età, deve esserne il critico, cioè intenderla e discernerla e qualificarla.¹⁰

But Croce pointed out two more interpretative lines of the Machiavellian work that, in his view, are incorrect:

⁷Giuseppe Marocci, *A consciência de um império. Portugal e o seu mundo (sécs. XV-XVIII)*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2012, p. 251 *et seq.* Manuel Augusto Rodrigues, *A obra exegética de D. Jerónimo Osório no contexto do Humanismo, da Reforma e da Contra-Reforma*, Separata da revista *Theologica*, vol. XVI, fsc. III-IV, Braga, 1983.

⁸Sandra Bagno, “*Il principe* di Machiavelli nelle lessicografie latinoamericane: il Brasile caso emblematico? Dall'eredità culturale del colonizzatore all'autonomia lessicografica specchio di un'identità nazionale”, In: María Begoña Arbulu Barturen; Sandra Bagno, *La recepción de Maquiavel y Beccaria en ámbito ibero-americano*, Padova, Unipress, 2006, p. 183-240.

⁹*Idem*, “‘Maquiavélico’ versus ‘maquiaveliano’ na língua e nos dicionários monolíngues brasileiros”, *Cadernos de tradução*, vol. 2, n. 22, Florianópolis, 2008, p. 129-150. Available from: <<http://www.periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/traducao/article/view/2175-7968.2008v2n22p129>>. Accessed on: September 29, 2013.

¹⁰I know very well that Machiavelli was denied the nature of philosopher, and that he smirked at those who wanted him to speak philosophically, and that his importance was attributed to other things, among them, one that still tends to repeat itself but I confess to not understand, namely that he supposedly did nothing more than to put in writing the habits of his time. Whether he was a secretary or disseminator, it seems to me that he is not just a thinker but neither just a writer, who, for being an interpreter of an era, should exercise a critical action over it, that is, to understand it, analyze it and qualify it” (translated from Portuguese). Benedetto Croce, “Una questione che forse non si chiuderà mai. La questione del Machiavelli”, *Quaderni della ‘Critica’*, n. 14, Jul. 1949, p. 1. Available from: <<http://ojs.uniroma1.it/index.php/quadernidellacritica/article/view/1938/1935>>. Accessed on: July 12, 2013.

Un'altra interpretazione del Machiavelli, che il Foscolo nei *Sepolcri* mise in bellissimi versi e che già era stata escogitata da Benedetto Spinoza, ne faceva uno svelatore ai popoli delle oppressioni e crudeltà dei sovrani assoluti: alla qual cosa il Machiavelli non pensò mai. Una terza lo considera ardente patriota italiano, che sulla salvezza e grandezza della patria raccolse tutti gli sforzi della sua mente e tutta la passione del suo cuore; e questo è vero, ma in questo egli ebbe molti e nobilissimi suoi pari, laddove nell'atteggiamento mentale che fu veramente suo, fu il solo o primo, sicchè ebbe molti consapevoli o inconsapevoli scolari anche fra quelli che lo rinnegavano o credevano di rinnegarlo.¹¹

Therefore, according to Croce, the theses that say Machiavelli “did nothing more than to put in writing the habits of his time” would be wrong, even if found in many books. Another interpretation would be that he was “a revealer of the oppressions and cruelties of the absolute monarchs to the people”. Or even just “a fervent Italian patriot who committed all the energies of his mind and all the passion of his heart to the greatness and salvation of the homeland”. Referring to the analytical scheme of the Italian philosopher, would interpretations of the Machiavellian work also emerge in Brazil — chronologically before 1949 — based on one or more of these three concepts, which, according to Croce, are incorrect?

The first translation into Portuguese

Studies carried out in Portugal and Brazil enable us to answer the second question. When comparing the Lusophone environment to other great linguistic and cultural backgrounds of European origin, one must first recognize the “delay” in the publication of *Il principe* fully translated into Portuguese and the beginning of the free circulation of the book in the country.¹² Contrary to what happened in linguistic contexts such as English, Spanish, and French, among others,¹³ it was only in the 1930s that the first translation was published in Rio de Janeiro, with the following words on the cover: “Nicholas Machiavel.

¹¹Another interpretation of Machiavelli, which Foscolo put in very beautiful verses in *Of the Sepulchres* and had already been proposed by Benedict de Spinoza, portrayed Machiavelli as a revealer of the oppressions and cruelties of the absolute monarchs to the people: something that Machiavelli never thought of. A third interpretation considers him a fervent Italian patriot who committed all the energies of his mind and all the passion of his heart to the greatness and salvation of the homeland; and that is true, but in this he had many and most noble peers, while in the mental attitude that was truly his, Machiavelli was the only and the first; to such an extent that he had many conscious or unconscious disciples, even among those who disowned him or believed to disown him” (translated from Portuguese). Benedetto Croce, “Una questione che forse non si chiuderà mai. La questione del Machiavelli”, *Quaderni della “Critica”*, n. 14, Jul. 1949, p. 1. Available from: <<http://ojs.uniroma1.it/index.php/quadernidellacritica/article/view/1938/1935>>. Accessed on: July 12, 2013.

¹²Sandra Bagno, “*Il principe* nell’area luso-brasiliana e le sue prime traduzioni in portoghese”, In: Alessandro Campi (ed.), *Il principe di Niccolò Machiavelli e il suo tempo 1513-2013*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 2013, p. 219-220.

¹³Nella Bianchi Bensimon, “*Il principe* di Machiavelli nella Francia del XVI secolo”; Jacob Soll, “La traduzione del *Principe* di Amelot (1683)”; Maurizio Tarantino, “*Il principe* nella tradizione politico-letteraria europea dell’Ottocento”, In: Alessandro Campi, *op cit.*, p. 177-183; 184-185; 259-268.

O príncipe. Tradução de Elias Davidovich Prefacio de Mauricio de Medeiros, 1933, Calvino Filho Editor” (Figure 1).¹⁴

Two years later, in 1935, the first complete Portuguese translation was published in Coimbra.¹⁵ However, an important aspect concerning one of the questions asked about the response to the works of Machiavelli and the Machiavellianism in the Lusophone linguistic and cultural contexts is worth highlighting. Even though the translation and publication of *Il príncipe* was most delayed in the Portuguese-Brazilian area, it does not mean that, in this context, the Machiavellian works have remained unknown. Giuseppe Marcocci claims that it is possible to recognize clear signs of Machiavellian notions, camouflaged with wisdom, in the Portuguese political treatises published shortly after the publication of the first Roman editions of the *Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio* (1531) and *De principatibus* (1532).¹⁶ The innovative strength of Machiavellian ideas would soon be noticed. If there was an immediate adoption of the lessons of the Florentine secretary by the Portuguese scholars — prompting Portugal, in the words of Marcocci, to strengthen its empire “in the shadow of Machiavelli” —,¹⁷ on the other hand, two reactions of unambiguous meaning

Studies on the definitions of words derived from the noun “Machiavelli” in dictionaries over the centuries show that even today only entries with derogatory meanings are recorded in general

concerning the previously mentioned fact would come from the same Lusitanian context — the stand taken by Jerónimo Osório and the listing of Machiavelli’s works on the *Index librorum prohibitorum*.

These restrictions produced a paradoxical situation: theoretically, no one could read the works of Machiavelli because they were banned. Yet, at the same time, the name of the Florentine secretary would be established in the Portuguese language as a common name, to the point of being labeled as a noun in dictionaries, as we have seen, with only derogatory connotative meanings. If *Vocabulário português & latino* (1727), by Rafael Bluteau, records only the entries “Machiavel” and “Machiabelista”,¹⁸ the word family derived from “Machiavel” would increase throughout the centuries. In the 19th and 20th centuries, authorized works such as

¹⁴When it is not mentioned otherwise, the quotes, including proper nouns, will always correspond to the texts used as sources and their spellings.

¹⁵Nicolau Maquiavel, *O príncipe. Com um artigo de Mussolini a servir de introdução*, translated by Francisco Moraes, Coimbra, Atlântida; Livraria Editora Coimbra, 1935.

¹⁶Giuseppe Marcocci, *A consciência de um império*. Portugal e o seu mundo (sécs. XV-XVIII), Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2012, p. 251 et seq.

¹⁷*Idem*, “Construindo um império à sombra de Maquiavel”, In: Bentes Monteiro; Sandra Bagno (eds.), *Maquiavel no Brasil*. Dos descobrimentos ao século XXI. Rio de Janeiro, Editora FGV; Faperj, no prelo.

¹⁸Raphael Bluteau, *Vocabulário português & latino*, vol. 5, Coimbra, Collegio das Artes da Companhia de Jesu, 1712-1727. T. V (L.M.N.), p. 234. Available from: <<http://www.brasiliana.usp.br/en/dicionario/1/machiabelista>>. Accessed on: September 29, 2013.

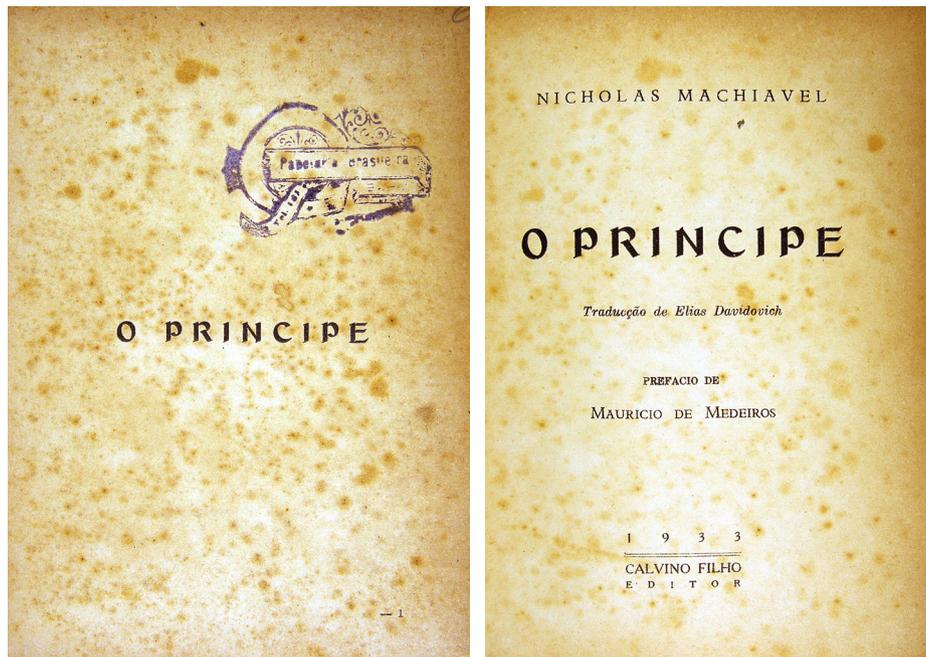


Figure 1. Photographs of the back covers of *The prince*, by Nicholas Machiavelli. Translated by Elias Davidovich, with preface by Mauricio de Medeiros, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933.

Novo dicionário da língua portuguesa (1926), by Candido de Figueiredo,¹⁹ and *Grande dicionário da língua portuguesa* (1954), by António de Moraes Silva,²⁰ would record, respectively, six and seven entries with derogatory connotative meanings. Therefore, the Brazilian and Portuguese translations were published after the start of a process of re-reading of the Florentine secretary's works at the international level. Both translations were published before the reflections of Croce and, thereby, likely to be studied according to his analytical framework, proposed about 15 years later by the Italian philosopher.

Would it be possible to recognize in the first edition — the Brazilian translation by Calvino Filho — a form of awareness about the distortion of the work of Machiavelli as a result of the Portuguese censorship, reflected in a certain way by the lexicographers at the linguistic level? In other words, how did Brazil, a country that little more than a decade before celebrated the centenary of its own independence, experience the opportunity to pierce the veil of the inquisitorial heritage on an issue so emblematic, according to Wilson Martins,²¹ due to the centuries-old exclusion from the cultural achievements of the Italian *Rinascimento*? Would this occasion take place under the sign of new interpretations of the Machiavellian work produced in the Enlightenment and/or Romantic Europe? Or would the translation by Calvino Filho publishing house confirm, even in the

¹⁹Candido de Figueiredo, *Novo dicionário da língua portuguesa*, vol. II, Portugal; Brasil, Arthur Brandão, 1926, p. 92.

²⁰António de Moraes Silva, *Grande dicionário da língua portuguesa*, vol. VI (IRI-MOR), Lisboa, Confluência, 1954, p. 500. This is the revised and expanded edition of the original book from 1789.

²¹Wilson Martins, *História da inteligência brasileira*, vol. I (1550-1794), São Paulo, Cultrix, 1977, p. 13 et seq.

1930s, the interpretation of inquisitorial profile of *Il principe* that was transmitted over the centuries first by the Portuguese dictionaries?

Observed through the paratextual aspect, the mentioned covers of the two translations, which integrate what Gérard Genette defines as paratext,²² offer important elements to answer the questions that we have raised. They highlight obvious differences concerning the *vexata quaestio* of the Portuguese orthographic rules, as can be noted from the diversity of transcriptions of the Florentine secretary's name, with "Nicholas Machiavel" in the Brazilian edition and "Nicolau Maquiavel" in the Lusitanian publication. This latest edition, "with an article by Mussolini as an introduction", reminisced about what happened in Italy shortly before, namely, the publication of the famous edition of *Il principe con il prelude al Machiavelli di Benito Mussolini and il saggio di Francesco De Sanctis* in 1928.²³ Therefore, in the Portuguese context of the mid-1930s, the Lusitanian edition of *Atlântida* offers an interpretation with evident political-ideological connotations, in such a way that it induced João Bettencourt da Câmara to define it in 2005 as "The first Portuguese edition of *The Prince* or the fascist Machiavelli by Francisco Morais".²⁴

The Brazilian edition, which was published two years before the Lusitanian version, had on the cover the indication of a preface by Mauricio de Medeiros, an intellectual who, in addition to his involvement in the psychiatric medical field, would distinguish himself as a writer and polemicist for the political positions he held under the presidencies of Nereu Ramos and Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira.²⁵ In 1955, he would also become a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters.²⁶

²²Gérard Genette, *Soglie. I dintorni del testo*, translated into Italian by Maria Camilla Cederna, Torino, Einaudi, 1989.

²³Niccolò Macchiavelli, *Il principe con il prelude al Machiavelli di Benito Mussolini e il saggio di Francesco De Sanctis*, Milano, Società anonima Notari; Istituto Editoriale Italiano, 1928. The article "Preludio al 'Machiavelli'", by Mussolini, had already appeared in *Gerarchia – Rivista politica*, ano III, n. 4, April 1924. See Edoardo Susmel; Duilio Susmel (eds.), *Opera omnia*, vol. 20, Firenze, La Fenice, 1956, p. 251-254.

²⁴João Bettencourt da Câmara, "A primeira edição portuguesa d'O *principe* ou o Maquiavel fascista de Francisco Morais", *Res-pública: revista lusófona de ciência política e relações internacionais*, vol. 1, n. 1, 2005, p. 24 et seq. Available from: <<http://recil.grupolusofona.pt/handle/10437/371>>. Accessed on: July 14, 2013.

²⁵See Biblioteca da Presidência da República. Nereu Ramos. Ministérios. Available from: <<http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/ex-presidentes/nereu-ramos/ministerios>> and Biblioteca da Presidência da República. Juscelino Kubitschek. Ministérios. Available from: <<http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/ex-presidentes/jk/ministerios>>. Accessed on: September 13, 2013.

²⁶According to the website of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, Mauricio Campos de Medeiros was: "The fourth occupant of Chair 38, elected on April 28, 1955, in succession to the Academic Celso Vieira and received by the Academic Clementino Fraga on August 9, 1955. Mauricio de Medeiros was born in the city of Rio de Janeiro on July 14, 1885. He was the son of José Joaquim de Campos da Costa de Medeiros and Maria Carolina Ribeiro de Medeiros. Mauricio de Medeiros died in Rio de Janeiro on June 23, 1966. One of his brothers, Medeiros e Albuquerque, was a relevant and prominent figure in Brazilian letters, having held the presidency of the Brazilian Academy of Letters in the 1920s. Doctor, teacher, writer and politician, Mauricio de Medeiros studied at the Colégio Pedro II and at the Faculdade de Medicina do Rio de Janeiro, in which he would become one of the chair professors. He took courses of medical specialization in France, in 1906 and 1907. After his return to Brazil, he began collaborating with some papers of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, among which were the 'Gazeta de Notícias' and 'Correio Paulistano', in 1908 and 1909. When the journalistic activity was resumed in Brazil in 1920, he collaborated in the following years with 'A Gazeta' (São Paulo) and 'A Noite', 'Correio da Manhã', and 'Diário Carioca' (Rio de Janeiro). After getting involved in politics, he was elected state representative in the State of Rio de Janeiro in 1916 and Congressman in 1921. He was elected to Congress again in 1927 and 1930. In 1950, he was appointed head of the Brazilian delegation to the First International Psychiatry Congress. He also participated in the congresses of Neuropathology held in Rome and London in the years 1952 and 1955, respectively. He served as Minister of Health in the governments of Nereu Ramos and Juscelino K. de Oliveira". Regarding his works, see "Peço a palavra, 1924; Segredo conjugal, 1933; Ideias, homens e fatos, 1934; Folhas secas; Joaquim Nabuco, O casamento; O inconsciente diabólico; Rússia e Homens notáveis, 1964". Available from: <<http://www.academia.org.br/abl/cgilua.exe/sys/start.htm?infoid=562&sid=343>>. Accessed on: September 12, 2013.

The accusation of Medeiros

Before going on to the preface of *The prince* published by Calvino Filho, we must remember some relevant facts about the political activity of Mauricio de Medeiros in that cultural environment of Rio de Janeiro. In 1932, he published, with the same publishing house, *Outras revoluções virão...*, a paradigmatic essay about Brazil's political conflicts in the early 1930s. Indeed, engaging the reader in the "Preamble", that is, the "threshold" of the volume, according to Gérard Genette's lexicon, Medeiros writes:

Quasi um anno e meio já passou sobre a surpreendente pacificação com que o Exercito Nacional, para evitar effusão de sangue, tomou a direcção do paiz de seus legitimos poderes, para entregal-a a um grupo de politicos, sobre cuja orientação doutrinaria nada se pode até agora perceber. Os actuaes governantes fallam, é certo, num programma revolucionario, num ideal revolucionario, numa acção revolucionaria a desenvolver. Mas tudo isso é tão inconsistente, que até agora nada de concreto e palpavel se exteriorizou, a não serem as perquisições sobre actos administrativos, de cuja responsabilidade não tem sido possivel exhimir alguns dos maioraes da propria Revolução inquiridora.²⁷

This is evidently a denunciation of a serious political situation, in which there would be no more "legitimate power", as a result of a "revolution" whose "programs" and "actions" would be inconsistent", according to Medeiros. About these programs and actions, he would weave bitter reflections:

Apreciadas as cousas no terra a terra da vida administrativa, o que, imparcialmente, se verifica é que a falta de qualquer doutrina politica systematizada, que oriente o Governo Revolucionario, tem-n'o feito perder tempo, tactear, hesitar, com damno evidente para sua popularidade e ainda maior para a vida do paiz. Pouco a pouco os mesmos erros de seus antecessores legaes vão sendo repetidos. [...] E, enquanto isso, nenhum acto de projecção, de grandeza, de profundidade verdadeiramente revolucionarias, foi praticado. Dir-se-ia que vivemos sob o mesmo culto da incompetencia, que caracteriza o regimen presidencial.²⁸

²⁷"Almost one and a half year has passed since the surprising pacification in which the National Army, to avoid bloodshed, took the leadership of the country from its legitimate powers, to deliver it to a group of politics, whose doctrinal orientation could not be detected until now. The current rulers fail, for sure, to have a revolutionary program, a revolutionary ideal, a revolutionary action to develop. But all of this is so inconsistent that so far nothing concrete and palpable was externalized, besides the scrutinies on administrative acts, and it has not been possible to clear even some of the major characters of the Revolution itself from these responsibilities." Mauricio de Medeiros, *Outras revoluções virão...*, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1932, p. 8-9.

²⁸Judging things on the routine of administrative life, what one impartially sees is that the absence of any systematic political doctrine guiding the Revolutionary Government, has made it waste time, fumble, and hesitate, with evident damage to its popularity and even greater to the life of the country. Little by little, the same mistakes of its legal predecessors are being repeated. [...] And, in the meantime, no act of truly prominence, magnitude, and depth was practiced. One could say we live under the same cult of incompetence that characterizes the presidential regime." Mauricio de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p. 8.

To defend his thesis of a Brazil living “under the same cult of incompetence” that had characterized the previous “presidential regime”, Medeiros chooses to offer an argumentative explanation, in which a series of questions correspond to answers with the aim of showing how and why the “revolutionaries” had failed:

Debalde busca-se nos actos a expressão dos objectivos reaes da Revolução. Combater oligarchias? Ellas ahi estão sendo substituidas pela parentela dos poderosos de hoje, empanada nos cartorios, nos logares redondos, nas sinecuras. Moralizar a administração? Não é em uma geração que se consegue tal objectivo, quando 40 annos de presidencialismo, do qual foram participes os politicos, que hoje governam o paiz, crearam o habito viciado de luxo de poder e de seu uso em proveito de classes e individuos privilegiados pelas graças do Governo.[...] Defender a autonomia federativa? E as intervenções nos Estados com a escandalosa política dos corrilhos dictando interventores bisonhos? E o Codigo dos Interventores?²⁹

When evaluating the results, after “nearly one and a half year”, and the “real objectives” of the “acts” performed by the “Revolution” and its various protagonists, Medeiros says:

Não é de atribuir má fé a esses chocantes dispauterios. O que um exame sereno das circunstancias mostra é que a força dos maus habitos não encontra, para resistir-lhe, a segurança de um Governo esteiado em uma doutrina politica systematica e coordenada. Estamos ha mais de um anno sendo governados sem Congresso. Parece que toda a furia revolucionaria se concentrou em extinguir o unico poder legitimamente representativo da opinião, em uma democracia: o Parlamento.³⁰

After denouncing how the “extinction” of “Parliament” occurred, Medeiros continues his analysis arriving at the more obvious and inevitable consequences, highlighting a crucial issue in the successive chapters of *Outras revoluções virão...* — the nature of the presidential system in Brazil:

²⁹In vain we seek the expression of the real goals of the Revolution in the acts. To fight oligarchies? They are being replaced by relatives of the powerful men of today, installed in registries, in the round places, in the sinecures. To moralize the administration? It is not in one generation that one achieves such goal, when 40 years of presidentialism, a regime in which the politicians that rule the country now used to participate, created the addictive habit of the luxury of power and its use for the benefit of the privileged classes and individuals that receive the resources of the Government. [...] To defend the federal autonomy? And what about the interventions in the states, where the scandalous “corrilhos” (collusion) policy imposes inexperienced interventionists? And the Code of Interveners?” Mauricio de Medeiros, *Outras revoluções virão...*, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1932, p. 8-9.

³⁰It is not about pointing out bad faith in these preposterous acts. What a serene examination of the circumstances shows is that the force of bad habits does not find the security of a Government supported by a systematic and coordinated political doctrine to resist it. We are now for more than a year being ruled without a Congress. It seems that all the revolutionary fury focused on extinguishing the single legitimate representative power of opinion in a democracy: the Parliament.” Mauricio de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p.10.

E' possível que esse [o Parlamento], que ahi estava, não fosse senão uma imitação grotesca de um orgam representativo da soberania popular. Não tendo o regimen presidencial o remedio plastico e instantaneo da dissolução constitucional dos parlamentos — medida admiravel que acaba de restituir á Inglaterra uma tranquillidade seriamente abalada — concebe-se que a opinião exacerbada faça dissolver, pela força, parlamentos e governos, que funcionem em divorcio do povo. Mas, se é em nome deste que remedio violento, de consequencias imprevisiveis, é applicado, por falta de melhor, o que a logica impõe é a immediata consulta ás urnas para indicação de seus novos mandatarios.³¹

Convinced that presidentialism led to great evils nurtured for 40 years and that political revolutionaries continued progressing on the same line, Medeiros says:

E' impossivel, até á hora presente, prever em que sentido se orientará o paiz, quando um dia, lhe for dado dizer como quer ser governado. A maior parte dos habilissimos politicos, que orientam em seu proveito o descontentamento popular, é francamente adepta do regimen presidencial. [...] Os revolucionarios vencedores ficam em superficialidades, quando se lhes pede que apontem taes erros. Dir-se-ia que temem ir ao fundo da ferida. Si forem, verão que o mal unico, o mal essencial, o mal a curar no Brasil é esse proprio regimen presidencial, que a surpresa de 1889 conseguiu implantar na Constituição de 24 de fevereiro.³²

The conclusion reached by the author is expressed as follows:

E' a isso que se propõe este livro, sem visar os homens senão nas ligações de seus actos com a these que se pretende defender. Si o Brasil sahir desta Revolução, mantendo o regimen de 24 de fevereiro, esse movimento, que tão profundos abalos está causando ao paiz, terá fracassado no seu objectivo, inconsciente, mas sensível na alma nacional. E, então, não tenham a menor duvida: *outras revoluções virão...*³³

³¹"It is possible that this [Parliament], that was there, was nothing but a mockery of a representative entity of popular sovereignty. Since the presidential regime does not have the plastic and instant remedy of the constitutional dissolution of parliaments — an admirable measure that has just restored to England the tranquility that had been seriously shaken — one can understand that the exaggerated opinion may dissolve, by force, parliaments and governments that work against the demands of the people. But, if it is on behalf of this that a violent remedy, of unpredictable consequences, is applied for lack of a better option, what the logic imposes is an immediate election to indicate their new representatives." Mauricio de Medeiros, *Outras revoluções virão...*, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1932, p. 10.

³²"It is impossible, until the present moment, to predict in which direction the country will be guided, until one day the population says how it desires to be governed. Most of the skillful politicians, who guide the popular discontent to their advantage, are frankly supporters of presidential regime. [...] The winning revolutionaries remain in superficialities, when asked to point out its errors. One could say that they fear reaching the bottom of the wound. If they did, they would see that the only evil, the essential evil, the evil to be healed in Brazil is this presidential regime itself, which the surprise of 1889 manage to implement in the February 24 Constitution." Mauricio de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p. 13-14.

³³"That's what this book proposes, without targeting men but the links of their acts with the thesis that we intend to advocate. If Brazil comes out of this revolution keeping the February 24 regimen, this movement, which is causing such profound shocks to the country, will have failed in its objective, unconscious, but sensitive to the national soul. And, then, do not have the slightest doubt: *other revolutions shall come...*" Mauricio de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p. 15.

Medeiros returns to the question of the dangerous continuity of presidential regime/ revolution at various points in his essay, not avoiding explicit mentions of names he thought responsible for a process that produced “such profound shocks” to the country, as one reads, for example, in Chapter IX, “The real factors of the revolution of 1930”:

A Revolução de 1930 fez-se sem outro programma, além da simples conquista do Poder. E’ facto sabido que, ao chegar ao Rio de Janeiro com o caminho desobstruido de embaraços bélicos devido á curiosa “pacificação” dos generaes da guarnição do Rio, o sr. Getulio Vargas se considerava presidente eleito da Republica para o quadriennio de 1930-34: — eleito pelo povo, esbulhado pelo Congresso e empossado pela Nação em armas!³⁴

In the final pages of his essay, Medeiros describes which feelings and intentions led him to write it:

Este meu livro, escripto sem nenhuma especie de contensão mental, contem o de que meu pensamento vem cheio desde que comecei a opinar de publico. Mais de vinte annos de jornalismo, de vida intellectual no magisterio, nas tribunas de conferencia, nas do Parlamento — nunca me deixaram comprehender de outra forma as cousas brasileiras. As circumstancias me collocaram entre os que perderam posição politica por effeito da Revolução, cujas causas eu proprio busco, não nos homens que eventualmente lhe tomaram a direcção, mas na sequencia logica dos acontecimentos. [...] Não contem, pois, este livro, amarguras de saudosista. Nem tampouco ancia de adhesão na busca commum de formulas de reforma. São paginas de quem lamenta a falta de reflexão historica, e de quem vê tão claro aquilo que só a ignorancia procura fazer confusão.³⁵

The preface writer

As he had done in the “Preamble” of *Outras revoluções virão...*, Medeiros clearly reveals his motives when writing the following year his preface to *The Prince*, published by Calvino Filho (Figure 2). But his political involvement manifests in another way this time. He chooses a linguistic approach — to be more accurate, lexical-semantic — in order to help the reader understand a work that could contribute to the “historical reflection” about what he considers to be the complicated current Brazilian politics of the moment:

³⁴The 1930 Revolution was done without other program beyond the simple conquering of power. It is a known fact that, when Mr. Getúlio Vargas arrived in Rio de Janeiro with the path clear of warlike entanglements owing to the curious ‘pacification’ of the generals of Rio’s garrison, he considered himself the elected president of the Republic for the 1930-34 period: elected by the people, dispossessed by the Congress and sworn by the Nation guns!” Mauricio de Medeiros, *Outras revoluções virão...*, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1932, p. 90-91.

³⁵“This book of mine, written without any sort of mental restraint, contains what consumes my thoughts since I started to give opinions in public. More than twenty years of journalism, of intellectual life in teaching, in the tribunes of conference, and in the tribunes of Parliament — have never let me understand the Brazilian things in another way. Circumstances have placed me among those who lost their political position because of the Revolution, whose causes I search, not on the men who eventually took its guidance, but in the logical sequence of events. [...] This book does not have sorrows of nostalgia. It does not, either, long for joining the common pursuit for reformatory formulas. These are pages of one who deplores the absence of historical reflection, and sees so clearly what only ignorance tries to confuse.” Mauricio de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p. 240-241.

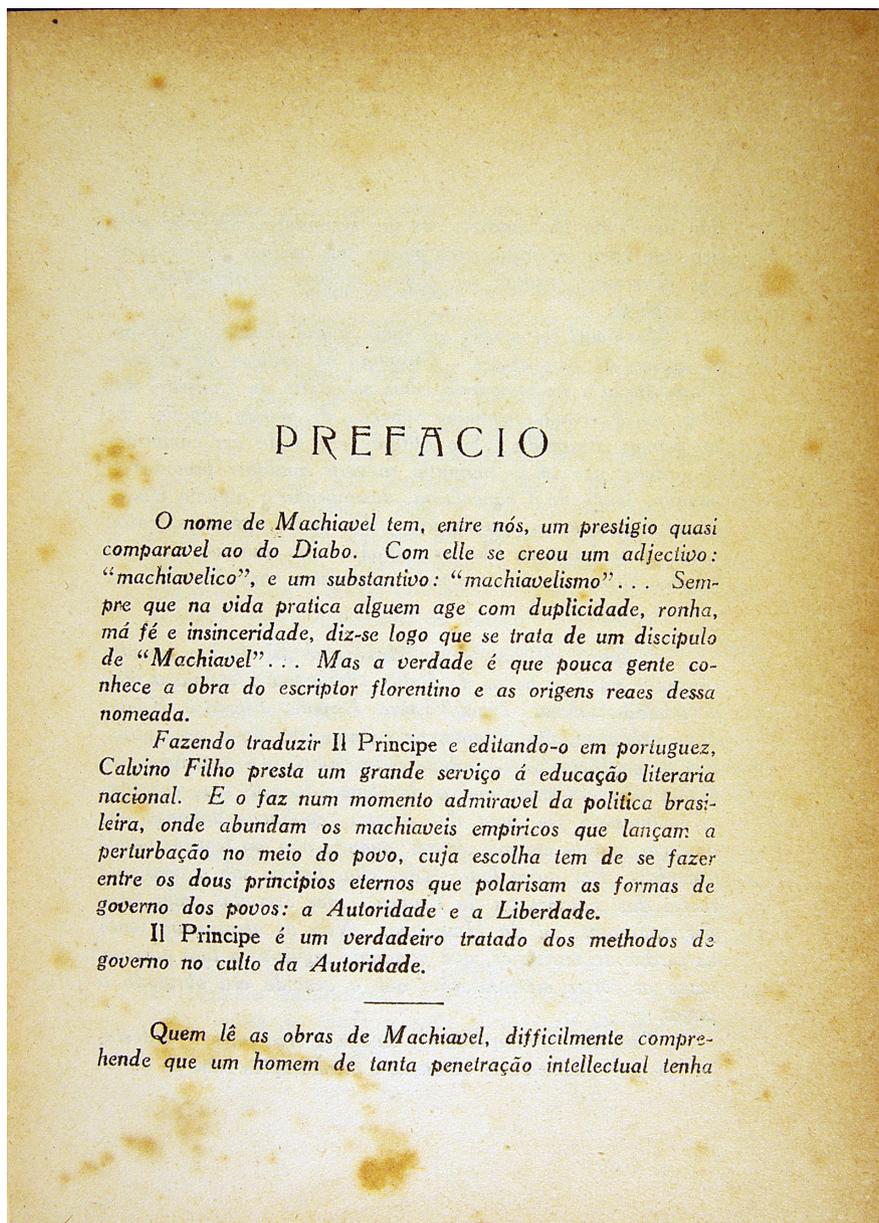


Figure 2. Photograph of the first page of the "Preface", by Mauricio de Medeiros, in Nicholas Machiavelli, *The prince*. Translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933.

O nome de Machiavel tem, entre nós, um prestígio quasi comparavel ao do Diabo. Com elle se creou um adjectivo: "machiavelico", e um substantivo: "machiavelismo"... Sempre que na vida pratica alguém age com duplicidade, ronha, má fé e insinceridade, diz-se logo que se trata de um discipulo de "Machiavel"... Mas a verdade é que pouca gente conhece a obra do escriptor florentino e as origens reaes dessa nomeada.³⁶

³⁶"Machiavelli's name has among us a prestige almost comparable to the one of the Devil. With him, an adjective: 'Machiavellian' and a noun: 'Machiavellianism' were created... Whenever someone acts in the practical life with duplicity, craftiness, bad faith, and insincerity, this person is called a disciple of 'Machiavelli'... But the truth is that few people know the work of the Florentine writer and the real origins of this naming process." Mauricio de Medeiros, "Prefacio", In: Nicholas Machiavel, *O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. V.

If we consider the “position” chosen by the preface writer for his intervention, which, to paraphrase the words of Genette, is not “neutral”,³⁷ he explains the starting point of his reflections with specifically linguistic-semantic arguments, presented as if they were obvious to any Brazilian. However, if observed more closely, these ideas raise some questions. According to his linguistic and cultural awareness, the preface writer considers obvious a pejorative connotative meaning for “Machiavelli’s name” that semantically is even worse than the meanings usually recorded by Portuguese dictionaries.³⁸ For Medeiros, to say “Machiavelli” “among us” in the early years of the 1930s would be nearly the equivalent of saying “devil”. In other words, in the common Brazilian linguistic-cultural awareness, the word “Machiavelli” has meanings that are typical of other linguistic and cultural contexts, as, for example, the Anglo-Saxon matrix. Since the 1600s, a specific Machiavellianism has been established among them, which would lead to

*Much Evil, Mitchell Wylie, Match a Villain,
and Hatch Evil were the expressions that
had meanings equal to “satan” (“devil”)*

the fixation in English, besides the family of words derived from the common name “Machiavelli”, of certain expressions, for instance, *Much Evil, Mitchell Wylie, Match a Villain*, and *Hatch Evil*. For all of them, the meanings would be equal to “satan” (“devil”).³⁹

Seeking “to help” his readers in the comprehension of the work of a nearly “devil” “Machiavelli”, Medeiros adds other semantic details: “Whenever someone acts in the practical life with duplicity, craftiness, bad faith, and insincerity, this person is called a disciple of ‘Machiavelli’...”. These are details that, unlike what was highlighted in the first two sentences, easily recall some definitions of monolingual dictionaries, in this case, Portuguese ones. However, as we saw, lexicographers in such dictionaries have not reached the point of evoking the “devil” to define the common name “Machiavelli”.⁴⁰

³⁷Gérard Genette, *Soglie*. I dintorni del testo, translated into Italian by Maria Camilla Cederna, Torino, Einaudi, 1989, p. 168.

³⁸Sandra Bagno, “Il principe di Machiavelli nelle lessicografie latinoamericane: il Brasile caso emblematico? Dall’eredità culturale del colonizzatore all’autonomia lessicografica specchio di un’identità nazionale”, In: María Begoña Arbulu Barturen; Sandra Bagno, *La recepción de Maquiavel y Beccaria en ámbito ibero-americano*, Padova, Unipress, 2006, p. 192 et seq. Sandra Bagno, “Maquiavélico’ versus ‘maquiaveliano’ na língua e nos dicionários monolíngues brasileiros”, *Cadernos de tradução*, vol. 2, n. 22, Florianópolis, 2008, p. 130 et seq. Available from: <<http://www.periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/traducao/article/view/2175-7968.2008v2n22p129>>. Accessed on: September 29, 2013.

³⁹Alessandra Petrina, “Machiavelli in Inghilterra e Scozia: il primo secolo del *Principe* in lingua inglese”; Michele Ciliberto, “Machiavelli e *Il principe* nell’Inghilterra tra il XVI e il XVII secolo”, In: Alessandro Campi (ed.), *Il principe di Niccolò Machiavelli e il suo tempo 1513-2013*, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 2013, p. 186-194; 235-247.

⁴⁰Sandra Bagno, *op cit.*

It is difficult to understand today if, with this *incipit*, Medeiros, when writing “among us”, indicated an interpretation in the “diabolical” sense that was truly shared by the Brazilian common linguistic and cultural conscience of that time, though not recorded by lexicographers. However, based on semantic-linguistic assumptions, Medeiros ends up concluding the first paragraph of his preface stating: “But the truth is that few people know the work of the Florentine writer and the real origins of this naming process”.⁴¹ In other words, he finishes with a second “truth”, linked to issues of linguistic nature.

Since Medeiros gives his assertions an axiomatic function, some important elements stand out in the first paragraph of his preface. According to him, the fact that a limited audience (“few people”) knew about *Il principe* in the 1930s was due to the circulation in Brazil of the Machiavellian work translated into other languages, with the foreseeable implications of translational and/or paratextual nature — and thus interpretative — resulting from that. And if we consider, for example, that the library of Machado de Assis contained, according to the census taken in 1960 by Jean-Michel Massa, a French edition of “MACHIAVELLI. *Essai sur les oeuvres et la doctrine de Machiavel, avec la traduction littérale du Prince et de quelques fragments historiques et littéraires...*”,⁴² one can hypothesize that those “few people” referred by Medeiros had the opportunity to read *Il principe* at least in French. This is the cultural environment, however, that raises other issues, taking into account the specific history of Machiavellianism outlined throughout the centuries and the different interpretations of the Machiavellian work by scholars and romantics,⁴³ interpretations to which Medeiros himself alludes in his preface. Nevertheless, an issue with so many implications as the one of the sources is not mentioned in another part of the paratext in Calvino Filho’s edition, nor by the preface writer himself when he introduces the translation by Elias Davidovich to the Brazilian public. But then, assuming that “among us” — in other words, in the Brazilian language and cultural identity — “Machiavelli” would mean nearly the “devil”, to which interpretations of *The Prince* did Medeiros refer to in his preface, mixing a specifically linguistic level to the content level? In other words, he alludes to an almost “devil” “Machiavelli” influenced by which typology of Machiavellianism and, after reading *Il principe*, by which language means?

The Prince in Portuguese

Well, even if we recognize that the silence of Medeiros about the prototext can be easily associated with certain common editorial habits at that time, it proves

⁴¹Mauricio de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, *In: Nicholas Machiavel, O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. V.

⁴²Jean-Michel Massa, “110. MACHIAVEL. Essai sur les oeuvres et la doctrine de Machiavel, avec la traduction littérale du Prince et de quelques fragments historiques et littéraires par Paul Deltuf. Paris, C. Reinwald, 1867. [Garnier]”, *In: _____, La bibliothèque de Machado de Assis*. Separata da Revista do Livro, Rio de Janeiro, n. 21-22, Mar-Jun, 1961, p. 208.

⁴³Bianchi Bensimon, “*Il principe* di Machiavelli nella Francia del XVI secolo”; Jacob Soll, “La traduzione del *Principe* di Amelot (1683)”; Maurizio Tarantino, “*Il principe* nella tradizione politico-letteraria europea dell’Ottocento”. *In: Alessandro Campi (ed.), Il principe di Niccolò Machiavelli e il suo tempo 1513-2013*. Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 2013, p. 177-183; 184-185; 259-268.

to be quite significant if linked to other facts, already evident from the second paragraph of the preface:

Fazendo traduzir *Il Principe* e editando-o em português, Calvino Filho presta um grande serviço á educação literaria nacional. E o faz num momento admiravel da politica brasileira, onde abundam os machiaveis empiricos que lançam a perturbação no meio do povo, cuja escolha tem de se fazer entre os dous principios eternos que polarisam as formas de governo dos povos: a Autoridade e a Liberdade. *Il Principe* é um verdadeiro tratado dos methodos de governo no culto da Autoridade.⁴⁴

The preface writer expresses with clarity, and his text appears to be a legitimizing instrument of his political position. After centuries of censorship, his aim is not to present a work as *The Prince* in a prejudice-free manner. Instead, Medeiros claims that it is exactly in that historical context that *Il principe*, finally in Portuguese, would allow a larger audience to recognize “the empirical Machiavellis” acting in an “admirable time of the Brazilian politics”, when the authority of Getúlio Vargas was evidently consolidated. His name, however — unlike what we saw in the pages of *Outras revoluções virão...* — is never explicitly mentioned. The “Preface” to the edition of *The Prince* published in Rio thus proves to be a clear denunciation of those who Medeiros believes to be the enemies of “Freedom”. *Il principe*, quoted in Italian and defined simply as “a real treatise on methods of government in the cult of authority”, is first invoked following the logic of political activism and then in a purely instrumental way. In other words, *Il principe* is defined as the “treatise” — by definition, a negative archetype — because of which it is possible to unmask what in 1933 had already manifested as an authoritarian regime. According to Medeiros, some specific “Machiavellis” were to blame for this and they were also easily recognizable by the Brazilian “people”, even if he adopts an only allusive expressive line in his preface.

But the preface writer highlights another element concerning the cultural setting and the manner by which the political battle was raging in the capital in the early 1930s. By enabling the Brazilian people to read *Il principe* in Portuguese, the author states that the Calvino Filho publishing house has done a “great service to the national education”. This statement is especially significant if we take into account the editorial line and the political role played by Calvino Filho during the “Varguismo”.⁴⁵ On this topic, Laurence Hallewell writes:

⁴⁴By having *Il Principe* translated and editing it in Portuguese, Calvino Filho does a great service to the national literary education. And the publishing house does that in an admirable time of the Brazilian politics, when the empirical Machiavellis that disseminate disturbance among the people abound, and there is a choice to be made between the two eternal principles that polarize the forms of government of the peoples: Authority and Freedom. *Il Principe* is a real treatise on methods of government in the cult of authority,” Maurício de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, In: Nicholas Machiavel, *O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. V.

⁴⁵N.T.: The period when Getúlio Vargas dominated the Brazilian political scene.

A Editorial Calvino já existia pelo menos desde 1932 com o nome de Calvino Filho. Em 1943, publicou algumas séries, como a “Coleção de Estudos Sociais” (em que foi publicada, por exemplo, *Lenine*, de D. S. Mirski), “A verdade sobre a Rússia” (com, por exemplo, *O Cristianismo e a Nova Ordem Social*, de Hewlett Johnson, o Deão “vermelho” de Canterbury, *Missão em Moscou*, do antigo embaixador norte-americano Joseph Davies, *Stalin* de Emil Ludwig, *Dez Dias que Abalaram o Mundo*, de John Reed) e “Luta pela Liberdade” (com obras como *A China Luta pela Liberdade* de Ana Louise Strong). Em 1944, a Calvino acrescentou a seu catálogo o *Anti-Dühring* de Engels e, em 1945, *URSS: Uma Nova Civilização*, de Sydney e Beatrice Webb, época em que se revelou ser o órgão da seção carioca do Partido Comunista.⁴⁶

From an opposing stand against those in power, Medeiros is then one of the intellectuals that were active in a politically engaged publishing house, whose target was the “national education”. He is one of the intellectuals who contributed to the dissemination, particularly through translations of works otherwise not easily accessible to most of the Brazilian society. The choice to publish the complete version of *Il principe* was based on the idea that only in this way the work could show its nature of being a “treaty on methods of government in the cult of the Authority”.

A modest life and filled with failures

Let us now observe the arguments chosen by Medeiros to influence his readers into interpreting — in the “diabolical” sense — *Il principe*, banned for so long, proving to be an excellent instrument for Brazilians to recognize those responsible for a political process already clearly authoritarian at that time. By accepting implicitly inquisitorial logics typical of the 16th century, Medeiros ultimately confirms (unconsciously?) the interpretative line of Rafael Bluteau, who, in the *Vocabulário portuguez & latino*, defined the entry “Machiabelista” using the following terms:

Machiabelista, ou Machiavelista. He o nome que se deo aos sequazes da doutrina de Nicolao Machiavello, Florentino, Secretario da Republica de Florença, nos annos de 1400. & Autor de hũ livros Politicos, cheyos de perniciosos dogmas. Foy Machiavello accusado de haver sido complice em duas conjurações contra a casa de Medicis, cahio depois em miseria, & com opinião de Atheo, ou Deista, sem religião alguma, no anno de 1528 ou 1529 morreo de hũa purga, que elle tomou fóra de tempo.⁴⁷

⁴⁶The Calvino Editorial existed at least since 1932 under the name Calvino Filho. In 1943, it published some series, such as ‘Collection of Social Studies’ (inside which *Lenine*, by DS Mirsky, was published, for example), ‘The Truth About Russia’ (with, for example, *O Cristianismo e a Nova Ordem Social*, by Hewlett Johnson, the ‘red’ Dean of Canterbury, *Missão em Moscou*, by the former American ambassador Joseph Davies, *Stalin*, by Emil Ludwig, *Dez Dias que Abalaram o Mundo*, by John Reed) and ‘Luta pela Liberdade’ (with works such as *A China Luta pela Liberdade*, by Anna Louise Strong). Calvino added in 1944 to its catalog *Anti-Dühring*, by Engels, and in 1945, *URSS: Uma Nova Civilização*, by Sydney and Beatrice Webb. At that point, it revealed to be an entity under the Rio de Janeiro’s section of the Communist Party.” Laurence Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil: sua história*, São Paulo, Edusp, 2005, p. 508.

⁴⁷**Machiabelista or Machiavelista.** It is the name given to the followers of the doctrine created by Niccolò Machiavelli, a Florentine, Secretary of the Republic of Florence in the 1400s, & author of political books, filled with pernicious dogmas. Machiavelli was accused of having been an accomplice in the two conspiracies against the house of Medicis. Then he fell in misery, & having the stance of an Atheist or Deist, died without religion in the year 1528 or 1529 of a purge, which he took in an incorrect period.” Sandra Bagno, “*Il principe* di Machiavelli nelle lessicografie latinoamericane: il Brasile caso emblematico? Dall’eredità culturale del colonizzatore all’autonomia lessicografica specchio di un’identità nazionale”, In: María Begoña Arbulu Barturen; Sandra Bagno, *La recepción de Maquiavel y Beccaria en ámbito ibero-americano*, Padova, Unipress, 2006, p. 192 et seq.

Well, while reinforcing this derogatory line of inquisitorial origin in the 20th century, Medeiros adds some information to induce his readers to disregard the figure and the work of the “devil” Machiavelli. Thus, he begins to list — quite imprecisely — a series of biographical and historiographical events, which the reader of the first translation of *The Prince* could not help but infer. Even if Machiavelli was a “man” of great “intellectual penetration”, his life supposedly consisted, to a significant degree, of “true failures”:

Quem lê as obras de Machiavel, difficilmente comprehende que um homem de tanta penetração intellectual tenha tido uma vida tão modesta, de tão secundaria actuação politica, tão cheia de insucessos mesmo nas missões diplomaticas, que deveriam constituir um campo propicio ás faculdades de seu espirito. Machiavel foi sempre um funcionario obediente e attento ás ordens de seus chefes. Dirigindo os serviços da segunda Chancellaria e funcionando como secretario do Conselho dos Dez, em Florença, nenhuma função de mando superior lhe foi jamais attribuida. Sua attitude era a de um cumpridor de ordens, que só se permittia suggerir qualquer providencia quando, longe da Chancellaria, desempenhava alguma missão junto a potentados estrangeiros. De suas suggestões, entretanto, a Senhoria de Florença raramente se utilisava. E suas missões foram, em sua maioria, verdadeiros insucessos.⁴⁸

Shortly after that, Medeiros begins to describe the historical context of the actions of the Florentine secretary, assuming that the Machiavellian “attitude” was of a simple “follower of orders”. The political fragmentation of the peninsula allowed foreign powers such as “France”, “Spain”, and the “Emperor” (of the Holy Roman Empire) to try expanding their respective territories and spheres of influence, to the detriment of the small Italian states that were unable to defend themselves against these strong armies. Along with the greed for territorial conquests of these monarchies, there was a parallel “internal uneasiness” of Italians, accustomed to politics involving fierce struggles between “partisan factions” and “groups of families”. The weakness of these “provinces”, “so far apart in feeling” among themselves, and “republics” or “principalities” that were dominated by various intrigues would be emblematic of the immorality of each one, reducing politics to “poisoning” and “treacherous murders”, derived mainly from personal ambitions. No one would be immune, observes Medeiros, to this way of interpreting politics: “Even the Roman Church is a center of political agitation and earthly ambition”. Moving on to describe the situation of Florence, for which Machiavelli worked, Medeiros recalls that the city tried to save the status of a rich “democratic republic” owing to its flourishing commercial activity. For this very reason, it became a

⁴⁸The person who reads the works of Machiavelli hardly understands why a man of such intellectual penetration had such a modest life, of such secondary political role, so full of failures even in the diplomatic missions, which should constitute a propitious field for the faculties of his mind. Machiavelli was always an obedient official and attentive to the orders of his bosses. When he was coordinating the services of the second Chancellery and working as secretary to the Council of Ten, in Florence, he was never assigned any activity of higher command. His attitude was of a follower of orders, who only allowed himself to suggest any measures when, away from the Chancellery, executed some mission with foreign potentates. His suggestions, however, were rarely used by the Lordship of Florence. And his missions were mostly true failures.” Mauricio de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, *In: Nicholas Machiavel, O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. V-VI.

target of greed from “stronger neighbors”. As for Machiavelli, his work on behalf of Florence as “secretary of the ‘Council of Ten of Liberty and Peace’” and “head of the second chancellery” was hardly successful. As Medeiros points out, he had never received the honor of acting as an “ambassador”.⁴⁹

Political skills

In this very complex context, Machiavelli would become first a victim, then, a theorist of a specific way of doing politics, in which the “mission” of the Florentine Secretary with the “Countess Catherine Sforza” would be paradigmatic, according to Medeiros. About this mission, he says:

Nas obras biographicas sobre Machiavel encontram-se todos esses detalhes das negociações entabuladas por Machiavel e que terminaram num imprevisto fracasso, pois, tendo concluido o assumpto numa noite, na manhã seguinte, na hora de assignar, a Condessa formulara uma nova exigencia. Deante da surpresa de Machiavel a Condessa se justificou dizendo que “as cousas se comprehendem tanto melhor, quanto mais são discutidas”.⁵⁰

As Medeiros states, one “skill”, which later was defined as “Machiavellian”, inspired the disloyal behavior of the “Countess”. Machiavelli suffered from that “skill”, with this being somewhat described later by the Florentine secretary in *The Prince*.⁵¹ In this treatise, Machiavelli would systematize ideas, an outcome of the things that were also learned by “socializing in foreign courts and getting information on their intrigues”, where he would have been in contact with politicians like Cesar Borgia, who would exert a truly “seductive” influence on Machiavelli, who believed to recognize in him his ideal “prince”:

Cesar Borjia era então o chefe mais temido, apesar da mocidade de seus 26 annos. Machiavel sente logo a influencia seductora do caracter nitido do principe. Mais tarde volta a negociar sósinho com elle e passa perto de 4 mezes no seu convivio. E tudo faz crêr que fossem os ensinamentos recebidos nesse convivio que lhe suggerissem mais tarde, no ostracismo, muitos dos paragrafos de seu livro *Il Principe*.⁵²

⁴⁹Maurício de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, In: Nicholas Machiavel, *O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. VI-VIII.

⁵⁰In the biographical works about Machiavelli, all these details of the consultations undertaken by Machiavelli and that led to an unexpected failure can be found, because, despite having come to a conclusion to the matter in one night, in the following morning, when it was time to sign it, the countess formulated a new requirement. Given the surprise of Machiavelli, the countess justified herself saying that “things are understood much better when they are discussed more.” Maurício de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, In: Nicholas Machiavel, *O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. VIII-IX.

⁵¹*Ibidem*, p. VIII.

⁵²Cesar Borjia was then the most feared boss, despite the youth of his 26 years. Machiavelli feels soon the seductive influence of the clear character of the prince. Later he once again negotiates alone with him and spends close to four months in his conviviality. And everything suggests that the teachings obtained in this socializing would inspire later, on limbo, many paragraphs of his book *Il Principe*.” Maurício de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p. IX

When Machiavelli found himself impoverished and without political support, he could only devote to studies. It was in this predisposition, stresses Medeiros, a psychiatrist, that the Italian thinker wrote his works:

A historia de Machiavel não faria jamais supor que sua obra merecesse da posteridade a consagração que teve. Quando Florença, combatida por varios inimigos, voltou ao dominio dos Medici, a perseguição que se move contra Machiavel não o poupa nem da prisão, nem das torturas. E' um episodio deprimente para o caracter de Machiavel, que se humilha vergonhosamente perante os inimigos. Sem meios para viver na cidade, retira-se elle, com sua familia, para uma pequena propriedade que possuia nos arredores, em S. Cassio. E' ahi que escreve O Principe, os Discursos sobre as Decades de Tito-Livio, a Arte de Guerra, e varias peças de theatro.⁵³

But the preface writer does not merely express his surprise with the “acclaim” received later by Machiavelli for *The prince*. He even “manipulates” his reader by stating:

Il principe, finally in Portuguese, would allow a larger audience to recognize “the empirical Machiavellis” when, evidently, the authority of Getúlio Vargas was already assured

Seu livro *O Principe*, ora traduzido, tinha um objectivo mesquinho. Machiavel se sentia sem recursos, no seu ostracismo. Queria um emprego. Escreveu *O Principe* para ser lido pelos Medici, para que estes vissem sua capacidade nos negocios publicos e a aproveitassem dando-lhe um emprego na administração. Tendo morrido aquelle a quem era feita a dedicatória, elle não teve duvidas: dedicou o livro ao outro. No fundo, tendo em vista agradar um soberano, Machiavel sustenta no *Principe* os methodos de se manter um governo pela autoridade.⁵⁴

⁵³The story of Machiavelli would never suggest that his work would deserve the posterity and the acclaim that it received. When Florence, countered by several enemies, returned to the dominion of the Medici, the persecution against Machiavelli did not spare him neither from prison nor from torture. It is a depressing episode for the character of Machiavelli, who humbles himself shamefully before the enemies. Without the means to live in the city, he retreats with his family to a small property he owned on the outskirts, in S. Cassio. It was there that he wrote *The Prince*, *Discourses on Livy*, *Art of War*, and several plays.” Mauricio de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, In: Nicholas Machiavel, *O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. IX-X.

⁵⁴His book *The Prince*, now translated, had a petty goal. Machiavelli felt he had no resources in his ostracism. He wanted to work. He wrote *The Prince* to be read by the Medici, so that they could see his ability in public affairs and take advantage of that by giving him a job in the administration. When the person to whom the book was dedicated died, he had no doubts and dedicated the book to another person. Basically, in order to please a sovereign, Machiavelli defends in *The Prince* methods of keeping a government by the use of authority.” Mauricio de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p. X.

By having as a real goal “to please a sovereign”, the Florentine secretary, citing “numerous historical examples” and “cases he analyzed”, would eventually come up with “general rules that constitute, as a whole, a manual of government by the use of force, violence and craftiness”.⁵⁵ Therefore, Medeiros finishes, rightly, saying that “One could conclude from this that Machiavelli has created what is called today ‘Machiavellianism’”.⁵⁶

Even though Medeiros was his detractor, he acknowledges — though only briefly suggesting the issue — that, for Machiavelli, “Freedom” was not less important:

Não ha a menor duvida de que sua obra merece ser lida por quem queira ter uma visão de politica, ao tempo do Renascimento italiano. Seus conceitos tanto na technica do exercicio da Autoridade, quanto no da Liberdade, guardam, por vezes, um frescor eterno, porque são syntheses de estados de alma humana, cuja evolução não tem sido grande.⁵⁷

To the concession made to a Machiavelli mindful of “the techniques for exercising both Authority and Freedom”, Medeiros soon contrasts his skepticism about the “sincerity” of the Florentine secretary:

Mas essa propria felicidade em exprimir tanto o que serve á Autoridade, no “Principe”, como o que serve á Liberdade, nos “Discursos sobre as Decades de Tito Livio”, é que me faz sceptico quanto á sinceridade do Autor, num como noutro dos rumos de seus trabalhos.⁵⁸

In the early 1930s, the first translation into Portuguese of *The Prince* ends up being offered to the Brazilian “people” as an instrument of political involvement and struggle against the difficult contingent situation. But, indeed, it confirmed the inquisitorial interpretation transmitted over the centuries, including by the monolingual dictionaries, about Machiavelli and his work. Even if inspired by the libertarian ideals — that once also encouraged Machiavelli, as Medeiros himself acknowledges — the preface writer ends up following the trails of detractors and inquisitors, in the same way as Jerónimo Osório did. This shows that still in the first half of the 20th century, *Il principe* did not cease to impose, in the words of Rodolfo De Mattei, its “imperiosa suggestione”.⁵⁹ And maybe Medeiros was sensitive to this fascination when approaching the end of his “Preface” and saying:

⁵⁵Mauricio de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, *In: Nicholas Machiavel, O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. X.

⁵⁶*Ibidem*, p. XI.

⁵⁷There is absolutely no doubt that his work deserves to be read by anyone who wants to have a vision of politics on the period of the Italian Renaissance. His concepts about the techniques for exercising both Authority and Freedom, maintain, in some parts, an eternal freshness, because they are syntheses of states of the human soul, whose evolution has not been great.” Mauricio de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, *In: Nicholas Machiavel, O principe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. XI-XII.

⁵⁸“But that happiness in expressing what serves both Authority, in ‘The Prince’, and Freedom, in ‘Discourses on Livy’, is what makes me skeptic as to the sincerity of the author, in one direction or the other of his work.” Mauricio de Medeiros, *op cit.*, p. XII.

⁵⁹Rodolfo De Mattei, *Dal premachiavellismo all’antimachiavellismo*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1969, p. VII. “Forte fascino” (translated by the author).

De qualquer forma, porém, não se pode pensar em uma cultura política, sem conhecer as duas principais obras de Machiavel. Calvino Filho fez bem em traduzir *O Príncipe*. Ele vem mostrar a muita gente como a humanidade pouco mudou nestes quatro séculos. Machiavel nasceu em 3 de Maio de 1469 e escreveu o Príncipe pouco depois de 1500... Por essa época, descobria-se o Brasil e começava o lento trabalho de sua colonização. Quatrocentos e trinta e três anos se passaram e a obra de Machiavel, lida em nossa língua, na tradução, que Calvino Filho aqui lhe dá, parece um delicioso conjunto de epigrammas de uma actualidade palpitante... [...] Positivamente o Brasil está na hora de ler Machiavel!...⁶⁰

Returning to Benedetto Croce, it is difficult to understand if, when the Italian philosopher spoke of the “discontent” provoked by the “many books, Italian and foreign about Machiavelli, he could also be referring to the first translation of *The prince* by Calvino Filho and to its “Preface”. But, as we have seen, one of those three interpretations, which are wrong according to Croce, can also be found in Medeiros’ preface. In this view, Machiavelli would have put “in writing the customs of his time”.

Indeed, the first full translation of *The Prince* into Portuguese, which should have been, theoretically, the first piece of a possible history of Brazilian Machiavellianism, arrived four centuries late and ended up falling in a predisposed terrain *ab imis*, that is, immune “against” Machiavelli as a person and/or author since the 1500s.

Only studies philologically attentive to the different aspects of the current political and cultural climate enable us to understand what could have been the sources of Medeiros when writing his preface to *The Prince*, published by Calvino Filho publishing house, and who were the recipients of his political attack on the “Brazilian authority” at the time besides the “Machiavelli”/“devil” Getúlio Vargas. This move, however, compels us to extend the search beyond national borders. According to the allusive logic adopted by Medeiros, his preface can be rightly interpreted equally as a response from part of the Brazilian *intelligentsia*, who was concerned at the political level about Vargas’ authoritarianism, and perhaps as a reaction to that *Príncipe col preludio al Machiavelli...*, published by Mussolini, who had used, as is known, the Machiavellian masterpiece also in an instrumental manner.⁶¹ This is an understandable and concerned response, but at the cost, once again, of a more adequate understanding of the importance of Machiavelli and his work in the history of Western culture.

⁶⁰Anyway, however, we cannot think of a political culture without knowing the two main works of Machiavelli. Calvino Filho did well in translating *The Prince*. It comes to show many people how humanity has barely changed in these four centuries. Machiavelli was born on May 3, 1469, and wrote *The Prince* shortly after 1500.. At that time, Brazil was discovered and the slow work of its colonization began. Four hundred and thirty-three years have passed, and the work of Machiavelli, read in our language, in the translation proposed herein by Calvino Filho, looks like a delicious set of epigrams of a palpitating current relevance... [...] Positively, it is time Brazil reads Machiavelli!...”. Mauricio de Medeiros, “Prefacio”, In: Nicholas Machiavel, *O príncipe*, translated by Elias Davidovich, Rio de Janeiro, Calvino Filho, 1933, p. XII.

⁶¹About the instrumental use of Machiavelli by Mussolini and his masterpiece, see Laura Mitarotondo, “*Il príncipe* fra il ‘Preludio’ di Mussolini e le letture del Ventennio”, In: Luigi Marco Bassani; Corrado Vivanti (eds.), *Machiavelli nella storiografia e nel pensiero politico del XX secolo*, Milano, Giuffrè, 2006, p. 59 et seq.