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## CHAPTER ONE

# Justus Lipsius and the Post-Machiavellian Prince

In his fine 1991 study of Neostoic ideology and the painting of Peter Paul Rubens, the classicist Mark Morford wrote that Justus Lipsius 'is now little known except to students of Seneca and Tacitus and to intellectual historians of the northern Renaissance'.[1] Given the growing number of studies devoted to Lipsius and his various legacies since Morford's book appeared, we might want to add students of early modern political thought and some scholars of literature to his list. Outside these particular corners of the academy, however, levels of Lipsius consciousness remain fairly low. He returned to the heart of European political life, in a manner of speaking, when the Justus Lipsius Building in Brussels opened in 1995, providing a new home for the European Union's Council of Ministers. One might have thought it appropriate that such a building be named for a distinguished Belgian political writer who argued against the excesses of patriotism and in support of a European peace based on principles of mutual toleration, and whose books circulated extensively throughout the greater part of the territory of today's EU. According to an EU press release, however, the building was in fact named for the Brussels street that used to connect rue de la Loi and rue Belliard and had been demolished to make way for its construction.[2]

Who was Justus Lipsius? He was born in 1547 in Overijse in Brabant.[3] He studied at the Jesuit college in Cologne from 1559 and was for a short while, from 1562 to 1564, a novice member of the order. Having obtained a bachelor's degree in arts, he moved to Louvain in 1564 to study law, though at this time he seems to have concentrated instead on his humanist studies, developing a reputation as an acute Latin philologist and publishing four books of *Variae lectiones* in 1568. In that year he joined Cardinal Granvelle's staff and travelled through Italy to Rome, where he studied the Tacitus manuscripts in the Vatican Library. A period of migration followed. Lipsius was back in Louvain in 1570, but he left again in 1571, visiting Liège, Vienna, and Leipzig before being appointed in 1572 to the chair in history at the university in Jena, a Lutheran foundation. He returned to Cologne to marry the recently widowed Anna van den Calstere in 1573, and in 1574 he published his great edition of Tacitus and left his post at Jena to return to Louvain, where he finally completed his law degree. Moving to a chair at the new Calvinist college in Leiden in 1578, Lipsius there published his two most significant original works, the philosophical dialogue *De constantia* in two books in 1583 and the six books of *Politica* in 1589. The publication of the *Politica* provoked a sharp public exchange in 1590–91 with Dirck Koornhert, who had accused Lipsius of favouring the methods of the Spanish Inquisition and of Machiavellism (‘*ille machiavellisat*’). In the wake of this controversy, Lipsius left Leiden in 1591, reconverted to Catholicism in Mainz, and took up a chair in ancient history and Latin in Louvain the following year. His great work of this final period was his edition of Seneca, published in 1605; he also compiled two handbooks of Stoic philosophy, the *Manuductio*, on ethics, and the *Physiologia Stoicorum*, on physics; there were other works on ancient Rome, especially on its military affairs, and a new book on politics, the *Monita et exempla*, in 1605. Lipsius died in Louvain in March 1606; legend has it that he rejected the consolation of Stoicism on his deathbed and gestured at a crucifix, insisting ‘haec est vera patientia’.

The scholarship on Justus Lipsius as a moral and political thinker dates above all from the publication in 1914 of Léontine Zanta’s *La renaissance du stoïcisme au XVI^e siècle*. This book charted the translation and dissemination of classical texts and the increasing use of Stoic tropes, arguments, and values in the writings of moralists of the time, and presented in its second part an anatomy of the main ideas of the Neostoic ‘triumvirate’ of Justus Lipsius, Guillaume du Vair, and Pierre Charron, whose books did much to systematise and popularise this Stoic current in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Anthony Levi observed in 1964 that the book ‘was a pioneer work, but its assumptions about the stoicism of the moralists have today sometimes to be questioned’.[4] That is true enough, but with a long look back it is the first part of this verdict that resonates the most. Zanta was not the first to argue for the historical and intellectual significance of Lipsius and the other Neostoics. Wilhelm Dilthey had earlier paid considerable attention to them as a part of his explorations of changing conceptions of rationality, the transformation of individual consciousness, and the development of the modern scientific worldview,[5] and Fortunat Strowski had considered the sixteenth-century Stoic moralists in the second chapter of his classic 1907 study of Pascal’s intellectual contexts.[6] Where Strowski offered a sketch, however, Zanta constructed a far more solid framework for the study of sixteenth-century Stoicizing moral theory in her book, paying attention in particular to the more technical Stoic works of Lipsius such as the *Manuductio*. She also successfully defended her work at the Sorbonne in May 1914, with *La renaissance* becoming the first thesis on a philosophical subject by a woman to be accepted by a French university for the degree of *docteur d'État*. Zanta was a significant feminist: she published her *Psychologie du féminisme* in 1922, for example, and campaigned for the rights of professional women in the interwar French press. She was also an inspirational figure for the young Simone de Beauvoir.[7]

Zanta's book helped to recover Lipsius the Christian Stoic moralist—the Lipsius above all of *De constantia*—forging a path along which subsequent scholars of the history of ethics would follow. Lipsius the political theorist—the Lipsius of the *Politica*—was by contrast comparatively neglected. J. W. Allen's 1928 study, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, for example, contains no mention of Lipsius or of any of the other major Neostoic authors, nor any consideration of the influence or function of ancient Stoicism concerning the political thinking of the period.[8] Jason Lewis Saunders's 1955 book-length study of Lipsius, the first in English, presented a biographical sketch of his writing career and detailed expositions of the main arguments of the Stoic writings on ethics and physics in *De constantia*, the *Manuductio*, and the *Physiologia Stoicorum*, but passed over the *Politica* and the other explicitly political writings altogether.[9] It is not difficult to come up with reasons why it might have been so easy for the *Politica* to be substantially ignored. First, in comparison with *De constantia* especially, *Politica* appears to be a considerably less original work. The bulk of the text is made up of quotations from classical authorities, giving the work something of the feel of a commonplace book. (It was this aspect of the book that provoked Montaigne's description of it as 'ce docte et laborieux tissu', and opinion differs down to the present over whether this was intended as a compliment or not.)[10] Second, and in contrast to all three of the works that Saunders examined in his book, for example, *Politica* does not advertise itself as having anything in particular to do with Stoicism, making it a less attractive object of study for those interested above all in Lipsius as the protagonist in a 'Stoic revival'. The author most frequently quoted in the *Politica*, for example, is Tacitus, who was no kind of Stoic; Stoicism itself is unmentioned throughout.

The scholar who did the most to draw attention to Lipsius's political thought was the historian Gerhard Oestreich, who died in 1978 and whose final book, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, was published posthumously.[11] For Oestreich, Lipsius's importance was many-sided. His books, in particular *De constantia* and the *Politica*, provided the definitive statement of a political ideology that found its inspiration in a number of mostly Latin texts and foregrounded themes of power, self-inspection, discipline, toleration, and moderation. 'Lipsius proclaimed the modern state, based on order and power, from amid the ruins caused by the religious wars', Oestreich wrote. 'The spirit it embodied and its exceedingly practical orientation derived from the Neostoic philosophy of the state, which was itself eminently practical'.[12] As well as helping to give shape to this ideology, Lipsius was also a prominent propagandist for it, and Oestreich stressed his role as a popular teacher, especially during his period in Leiden; his seven hundred correspondents, scattered all over Western Europe; and the fact that his books were sixteenth-century best-sellers, going rapidly through many editions and being translated into all the major European languages.[13] At the heart of Oestreich's account lies a reading of the *Politica*, whose contents are summarised in the third chapter of *Neostoicism*. His epitome gives particular attention to the fourth book, on actual constitutional practice,[14] with its discussions of religious uniformity, the rise and fall of governments, and 'the troublesome question of *prudentia mixta* or "reason of state"',[15] as well as to the fifth book, on military affairs, above all to its account of discipline.[16] Indeed, Oestreich considered this book central to the interpretation of the *Politica*, for in his view, 'The Leiden professor saw military force (*vis*) as the real foundation of the state.'[17]

Oestreich's claims for the historical significance of Lipsius's project were not small. In his view, the new emphasis on discipline on the part of the writers who contributed to the Netherlands movement played a key role in the military revolution that transformed first European warfare and then the internal organisation of the European states themselves. Prince Maurice of Orange had been one of Lipsius's students in Leiden in 1583–84, Oestreich observed, and he 'always referred to Lipsius as his teacher.'[18] Neostoicism was credited with being one of the major forces behind the consolidation of absolutist ideology, to the extent that it might be said to mark the moment when the national security state came to supplant the free city republic as the focus of political theorists' attention and loyalties.[19] Max Weber had argued for the importance of a Protestant ethic associated above all with Calvinism for understanding the increasing intensification of processes of rationalisation in early modern Europe that helped to stabilise early capitalist relations of production,[20] and Otto Hintze had gone on to suggest that there was an affinity between Calvinism and modern *raison d'état* arguments.[21] Oestreich offered a variation on the theme, suggesting that it might have been Neostoic ideology that had helped to spread an ethic of duty that bordered on asceticism, and that in the context of the early modern absolutist monarchies, furthermore, it made more sense to ascribe significant social and economic effects to this secular ideology than to any religious doctrine.[22] Oestreich's presentation of Lipsius and his interpretation of the political content of Neostoicism has been a very influential one, and his work continues to be cited down to the present (recently, for example, in Charles Taylor's large book on the history of the possibility of a secular society).[23] His position, however, is an increasingly awkward one. In particular, his critics are not persuaded that his argument about Lipsius's political thought has much to do with Stoicism at all, that his grander historical claims are sound, or that the historiographical tradition within which he was working was free from the taint of National Socialist ideology.

In the introduction to his recent edition and translation of the *Politica*, Jan Waszink expresses scepticism about the contribution of Stoic philosophy to Lipsius's argument. In this work, he notes, important Neostoic themes such as the reconciliation of Christian and Stoic doctrine or the desirability of suppressing the emotions do not make any noteworthy appearance; '[t]he Neostoic key virtue of *Constantia* is given no particular prominence'; and Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are 'entirely absent'.[24] Indeed, Waszink canvasses the mischievous suggestion that Lipsius's book might reasonably be considered an anti-Stoic argument, for a central claim of Stoic political theory was the identification of what was honourable (*honestum*) with what was useful (*utile*), which is one that Lipsius seems to deny. At the start of the famous discussion of 'mixed prudence' in 4.13, he asks whether it is 'allowed that I mix it [prudence] a little, and add a bit of the sediment of deceit?', and he answers that it is ('*ego puto*'), 'in spite of the disapproval of some Zenos, who *only approve that straight road which leads with virtue to honour*' and who 'do not think it permissible that *Reason, given by the Gods with good intentions, is used for deceit and malice*'.[25] 'We might of course define Lipsius' entire body of thought as "Neostoic",' Waszink observes, 'but in that case "Neostoic" must be taken as a mere synonym for "Lipsian", rather than as a reference to the recreation of the Roman Stoa'.[26]

With regard to Oestreich's historical claims, Philip S. Gorski notes the biographical connection that links Maurice to Lipsius and agrees that 'it seems reasonable to conclude that his own study of classical precedents was at least partly inspired by his mentor'. But he is sceptical about stronger claims of influence over the nature and content of the army reforms themselves, remarking that 'the intellectual impetus for the reforms came from William Louis rather than from Maurice' and noting that the reforms were set in motion years before 1595, when Lipsius published his compendium on ancient military affairs, *De militia Romana*. In line with the broader thesis of his book *The Disciplinary Revolution*, which defends Max Weber's original contentions about the importance of the Reformation in shaping subsequent social transformations against the criticism of Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault, Gorski suggests that the Dutch interest in military discipline owed more to Calvinism than to any Neostoicism, and that there may 'have been a psychological connection—an elective affinity—between their religious ethos and their military reforms because both placed so much stress on discipline, both as a value and as a practice.'[27]

The most far-reaching—and the most disturbing—challenge to Oestreich's argument about Neostoicism has been made by Peter N. Miller in his 2002 article, 'Nazis and Neostoics', which discusses the historical writings of Gerhard Oestreich and Otto Brunner.[28] Miller contends that understanding Oestreich's 1940 article, 'Vom Wesen der Wehrgeschichte' (On the Essence of Military History), 'is vital in order to appreciate why his post-war scholarship took the shape that it did'. In that article, the young Oestreich set out a wide-ranging and interdisciplinary research agenda to bring out the way in which 'the military in its manifold forms and expressions is ever more the guarantee of the life of the people in their conflicts with other states and peoples'.[29] Miller's central charge is that in his postwar work on Lipsius, Oestreich was to execute this research project without ever drawing attention to its Nazi origins and emphases, and that his transition to working on a structural history of early modern state building could be considered 'a more or less conscious attempt to efface the ideological position-taking' of his work in the Nazi period.[30] 'It is striking', Miller observes, 'that Oestreich's evocation of Lipsius's idea of discipline', which was central to his overall interpretation of Lipsius's political thought, 'seems to pick up every single nuance and echo of the National Socialist language of *Erziehung zum Wehrwillen*' (that is, education of the will to war).[31] Oestreich's readings of Lipsius's works were distorted and distorting. It is implausible, for example, to reduce the argument of *De constantia* to the claim that 'by fighting many battles are won, but none by flight',[32] and in a cutting phrase Miller refers to the way in which Oestreich 'evoked, rather than quoted' Lipsius in the *Politica*.[33] By fashioning a concept of *Sozialdisziplinierung* and arguing that Lipsian theory became first Dutch and then Prussian practice, Oestreich could work to 'turn Prussia from the great European exception (militarized and bureaucratized to the hilt) into the great European exemplar—the paradigmatic modern state'.[34]

An account like Miller's always runs the risk of a kind of ideological reductionism, placing too much weight on the values of National Socialist historiography in explaining the contours and content of Oestreich's postwar project. But even if we are tempted by that thought, it is worth emphasising that it is not just Miller who considers Oestreich to present a one-sided reading of the *Politica*. Waszink is another recent commentator who finds Oestreich's discussion perplexing in this regard. For while Lipsius did indeed agree with Machiavelli that the army was an important political institution—hence his devoting an entire book to the subject—'it appears untenable to say, as Gerhard Oestreich did, that Lipsius "saw military force as the real foundation of the state"'. If military affairs and military discipline were as important to interpreting the *Politica* as Oestreich had suggested, then we would expect to see military concerns shaping Lipsius's treatment of other topics in his political discussion, whereas, as Waszink observes, the only time the army is mentioned outside *Politica* 5 is in a brief discussion of the use of soldiers in peacetime in 4.7. 'The military', he concludes, 'is not central to the *Politica* at all'.[35] Miller's critique invites us to be suspicious of Oestreich's interpretation of Lipsius and of Neostoic political theory, and our examination of Lipsius's work needs to proceed as far as possible by working outside the interpretive framework that Oestreich did so much to provide.

One way of doing this is to pick up on a remark of Oestreich's concerning Lipsius and Machiavelli. 'This is not the place to continue the comparison between Lipsius and his great predecessor', he wrote, 'by investigating the concept of *patria* and the meaning of *virtù*, *fortuna*, *fatum* and *necessità* in their respective writings.'[36] But to continue to develop comparisons like these, it seems to me, may be an excellent way of moving out of Oestreich's shadow. Several scholars have been attracted by the project of trying to establish where Lipsius stands with respect to Machiavelli's political thought, among others, Martin Van Gelderen,[37] Richard Tuck,[38] Robert Bireley,[39] Jan Waszink,[40] and Jan Papy.[41] Machiavelli's *Prince* in particular provides a familiar benchmark against which to assess Lipsius's own argument; although Machiavelli was writing seventy years before Lipsius, 'Machiavellian' argument was both topical and controversial in the aftermath of the Massacre of St Bartholomew; and Lipsius himself, as we shall see, took the relationship between his own book and Machiavelli's political ideas to be an important one.

One clear account of the relationship between Lipsius and Machiavelli is that fashioned by Robert Bireley, which presents Lipsius as the founder, along with Giovanni Botero, of a specifically Catholic 'anti-Machiavellian' tradition of political thought. According to Bireley, Lipsius's chief concern was to 'elaborate a vision of practical politics, in response to Machiavelli, that would be moral, Christian, and effective in the circumstances of the late sixteenth century'.[42] He emphasises Lipsius's doctrine of providence, to which I return later in this chapter, rightly remarking that this 'is most important if he is to be understood as an anti-Machiavellian'.[43] But in general, his attempts to find anti-Machiavellian political theory in Lipsius's work are not especially convincing. He quotes from *Monita et exempla*, for example, on how a good precept is to

> be just and virtuous, and from the depths of the heart will issue forth upright [*honesta*] and useful [*utilia*] counsels. Let us not separate these two, that is, the upright from the useful. The doctor from Italy errs who teaches otherwise, who creates petty tyrants, not legitimate kings or princes.[44]

But as we have already seen, Lipsius equivocates on the Stoic equation of the *honestum* and the *utile* with his remarks in *Politica* 4.13 against 'some Zenos', and Bireley seems all too aware of the limits of his own argument. He writes that Lipsius's pragmatism 'brought him perilously close to Machiavellism himself',[45] and that with respect to the discussion of *prudentia mixta*, while '[a]t first blush he might seem to approve what could be understood as Machiavellian procedures', a 'careful analysis combined with a look at his later statements seems to preclude this conclusion *except perhaps in one or two instances*'.[46] So perhaps he is not so decisively such an anti-Machiavellian theorist after all.

The best response to Bireley's argument concerning both the Roman Catholic character of Lipsius's political thought and its 'anti-Machiavellian' aspect, however, has come from the files of the Vatican's Sacred Congregation of the Index (*Sancta Congregatio Indicis*), which were opened to researchers in 1998 and have allowed Jan Waszink to reconstruct in some detail the saga of the *Politica*'s flirtation with the Index of Forbidden Books (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*). The *Politica* was first published in 1589 and placed on Sixtus V's Index in 1590, but this document was retracted after the pope's death that same year and never circulated widely.[47] In Rome, Laelius Peregrinus was asked to vet the text of the *Politica*, and it seems that his *censura* was available to the Congregation at its meeting of 10 October 1592, which discussed Lipsius's book,[48] with Lipsius having in the meantime returned to the Catholic fold. That meeting decided to remove the *Politica* from the Index that was being prepared, a decision that was reversed two weeks later[49]—but the Index that was supposed to appear in 1593 was delayed, and it was during this delay that Lipsius agreed to expurgate the text of the *Politica* and the Vatican agreed not to include it on the Index after all. Both the new Index and the new version of the *Politica* were published in 1596.

Bireley discusses this sequence of events in passing and remarks of the alterations to the 1596 text that '[t]hese elaborations and changes must be taken into account in any discussion of the *Politics*, but none of them amounted to a change in his [i.e., Lipsius's] role as an anti-Machiavellian'.[50] What Waszink has demonstrated, however, is that the corrections Lipsius made to the text addressed neither of Rome's major objections to his argument, concerning religion and Machiavellism, in light of which, as Waszink gently puts it, 'one may find it surprising that the *Politica* indeed disappeared from the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*'.[51] On religion, Peregrinus's *censura* had objected to Lipsius's subordination of religion to politics in 4.3,[52] a strikingly Machiavellian move that aligned Lipsius with the *politiques* and to which the Church authorities were bound to object, but the objection was one that Lipsius ignored when he came to revise his text.[53] On Machiavellism, Lipsius agreed to cosmetic changes, which served to mask rather than to remove the Machiavellian component of his argument. Marginalia were altered in the introductory section, 'De consilio et forma nostri operis', for example, so that the words 'Machiavelli impresses me / though he sometimes goes against morality' were changed to 'Machiavelli is shrewd / but often immoral' (Machiavellus argutus / Sed saepe pravus). The main text these marginalia served to illustrate, however, remained unchanged.[54] Similarly, in 4.13, the final sentence calling for Machiavelli not to 'be so categorically condemned' (for 'whose hand is not flogging the poor man these days?') was removed, but Lipsius left untouched the Machiavellian argument about 'mixed prudence' that had itself provoked this concluding reflection. Concerning *Politica* 4.14, Peregrinus had objected to Lipsius's defence of the prince lying for the sake of the common good, and Lipsius once again ignored his objection.[55] If the *Politica* stayed off the Roman Index, it seems that this owed more to Cardinal Bellarmine's behind-the-scenes interventions on Lipsius's behalf than to any perception that it was an orthodox piece of Catholic, let alone 'anti-Machiavellian', political theory.

If we reject Bireley's particular interpretation of Lipsius as an anti-Machiavellian political theorist, a frequent alternative view that we find in the literature is that Lipsius gives us, to borrow Jan Papy's words, 'an attempt to produce a synthesis between the traditional mirror of princes, a popular genre among humanists, and Machiavelli's *Prince*'.[56] There is obviously something correct about this view, but we should pause for a moment and allow ourselves to be puzzled by this idea a bit more than scholars usually are. If the point is just that the typical Renaissance 'mirror for princes' praises the prince for his possession of conventional moral virtues, whereas Machiavelli teaches the need for the prince to learn how to be bad, then there would not seem to be any real difficulty at all. We might say it is just a matter of repositioning the mirror so that aspects of the prince's face that were formerly cast in shadow are brought into the light. But *The Prince* is itself a kind of mirror for princes, which complicates the question of just what it might be to produce a synthesis of this particular work with that particular genre. Quentin Skinner noted thirty years ago, for example, that *The Prince* was itself a 'recognisable contribution' to the mirror-for-princes literature, and he argued that Machiavelli 'may have had the further intention to question or even to ridicule' some of its humanist authors' values,[57] suggesting also that he was engaged in 'demolishing the usual scale of values underlying the mirror-for-princes literature'.[58] If *The Prince* borrows the literary form of the mirror for princes in order to attack its political content, then the question of what the synthesis of Machiavelli and the mirror-for-princes genre might be like recurs; we can no longer talk of simply repositioning the mirror because on this reading, Machiavelli has already done just that, so we may end up saying, with Jan Waszink, that the two writers are basically engaged in the same enterprise: 'like Machiavelli, Lipsius employs the mirror-for-princes format to criticise the political morality conventionally connected with it'.[59]

How deep is Machiavelli's challenge to the mirror-for-princes literature? In his recent book, *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince*, Peter Stacey has shown that it is an extremely deep attack.[60] It runs deep, furthermore, in a way that might be thought to pose a significant challenge for Lipsius in particular, if we do think that what Lipsius was doing in his *Politica* might have had something to do with Stoicism after all. For what Stacey has shown is, first, the political thought of the mirror-for-princes genre was always fundamentally Senecan, and therefore Stoic, and second, Machiavelli's *Prince* is at its core a thoroughgoing and quite systematic repudiation of that Senecan tradition of political thought. Neither thought is especially original to Stacey. The connection between Seneca's *De clementia* and the Renaissance mirror-for-princes literature has often been noted, and Richard Tuck observed in passing years ago with *De clementia* in mind that Machiavelli's 'criticism of conventional notions of a virtuous prince is largely an indirect criticism of Seneca rather than Cicero'.[61] Nevertheless, Stacey has certainly done more than anyone else to show how fruitful these thoughts can be in constructing a persuasive overall interpretation of Machiavelli's book. Rather than seeing Lipsius as someone who introduces patterns of Stoic argument in general and Senecan argument in particular into the political theories of the sixteenth century, as we have so often been encouraged to do, it seems to me that we need to learn to see him as someone who is attempting to salvage a version of Senecan or Stoic political theory and to reconstitute the mirror for princes in the wake of Machiavelli's shattering critique. The resultant argument does indeed combine or synthesise elements of the traditional mirror for princes and of Machiavellian political argument, but we need to peer a little closer at its architecture to see just how Lipsius went about trying to bring off this ambitious project. So: first Seneca and Machiavelli (largely following Stacey, in both cases), and then I shall turn my attention back to Lipsius.

Seneca's *De clementia* was written around the year 56 and takes the form of an address to the youthful new *princeps*, Nero, who had ascended the throne in 54. The work is not complete. What has come down to us is all of book 1, which constitutes a treatise on kingship, and a fragment of book 2, which offers praise of the virtue of *clementia*. We might see *De clementia* as doing two things in particular: first, attempting to impress on the new prince virtuous habits of rule, and second, providing a systematic defence of the Roman principate against republican criticism. In setting about the first task, Seneca deploys the idea of the mirror (*speculum*), which he uses to 'show you to yourself' (*te tibi ostenderem*)—or, as Stacey puts it, 'Nero is initially shown what he is through an impersonation, and is then praised for being identical to the person that is held out to him; but the praise is valid only if Nero recognizes himself to be the person which Seneca shows him to be'.[62] The second task is that of replying to the charge that the Romans had recently passed from a state of political freedom under the republic to one of subjection under Augustus Caesar and his successors. In place of this version of the recent history of Rome, Seneca offers his own narrative of a passage from republican corruption to rational principate. In the late republic, the Romans had lost their ability to live in accordance with true *ius* and thereby could no longer be said to be properly free; under the rule of the Caesars, on the other hand, the body politic was restored to health through the guidance of its virtuous ruler—'you are the mind of your *res publica* and it is your body'[63]—and *libertas* was thereby restored to the people.

Seneca's argument is fashioned out of Stoic themes. In Stacey's words, 'the fundamental theoretical movement pervading his text is Seneca's consistent application of the monological concept of Stoic *ratio* to his material'.[64] The rational Stoic community, however, is the world city or *cosmopolis*, and so the boundaries of the Roman principate are extended to the ends of the earth in order for Nero to become a universal monarch with unlimited jurisdiction.[65] If the state is to be rationally directed, furthermore, and its monarchy legitimate, then the *princeps* must be entirely virtuous, ruling in accordance with the Stoics' cosmic natural law.[66] And if the life of the community is regulated according to reason, then the people can plausibly be considered to be free.[67] Nero (of all people!) has thus become the functional analogue of the Stoics' wise man (*vir sapiens*), 'born to assist the community and promote the common good',[68] and hence the image in the mirror that Seneca presents to the new *princeps* has to be a quite extraordinarily idealising one. The ruler must always act in accordance with the providential reason that pervades the world, and acting in such a way necessarily promotes the general good, which means there is no troubling gap between the requirements of what is worthy (*dignum*) and what is useful (*utile*).[69]

We might think that if everything is providentially ordered, which means there is no room in the Stoic scheme for any kind of contingency, then there is no room either for the idea of fortune to be playing any role in this account. If we did think that, however, we'd be in for a surprise, as *fortuna* is something of a key word for Seneca; as Stacey writes, 'the centrality of *fortuna* to his thought requires some explication'.[70] Most generally, what we ascribe to *fortuna* is what appears to us to be contingent, but it isn't really: *fortuna* is just providence misunderstood. Nature, Fate, and Fortune are the same (and, Stacey observes, understood this way, fortune is 'characterised as divine, rational and male').[71] There is also, however, a more specific use of the language of *fortuna*, this time coded as female, that is repeatedly invoked to describe the apparent irrationalities we experience as good and bad luck in the moral life. What appears contingent or random is still providential, of course, but with the sage understanding that such setbacks in particular offer an opportunity to exercise or to test his virtue.[72] Seneca presents lurid descriptions of these encounters in strikingly gendered language, as the capricious goddess *Fortuna* struggles with the *virtus* of Roman heroes—and *virtus*, of course, is a distinctively manly affair.[73] The critical struggle, however, is not that of the particular agent against the world so much as the internal struggle for self-mastery, and the *virtus* that matters relates not to any external heroics but to psychological strength[74]—in particular, to the ability 'to be peaceful and calm, looking down from above at injuries or affronts'. To achieve this goal, the political ruler must above all cultivate the critical qualities of *magnanimitas* and *clementia*,[75] and it is when he is indeed the master of himself—and therefore not tyrannised by irrational *Fortuna*—that his people will enjoy peace, remain safe, and be free.[76]

Such is the outline of the Stoic argument that lies at the heart of Seneca's *De clementia*, whose main elements remain in place throughout the history of the mirror-for-princes literature and which is, as Stacey has shown, the central target of Machiavelli's criticism in *The Prince*, even if Seneca is not mentioned by name in the book. References to Seneca or to the Senecan tradition are, however, frequent. Machiavelli picks up on Seneca's medical metaphor when he prescribes the use of '*medicine forti*' (strong medicines) by the prince, in contrast to Seneca's '*mollis medicina*' (gentle medicine), and the examples he uses directly contradict Senecan teaching. 'Seneca and his Renaissance enthusiasts . . . had rigorously lauded the act of sparing conquered royalty on the grounds that it brought the conquering prince unparalleled glory', whereas Machiavelli advises killing them.[77] But the differences between Machiavellian and Senecan political theory are not just a matter of the one being more tough-mindedly ruthless than the other; rather, they develop out of a radically different approach to princely politics itself. The ideological fulcrum of Seneca's argument was his claim that the introduction of the principate had restored to the Romans their freedom. The opening sentence of Machiavelli's book, on the other hand, sharply separates principalities from republics—'All states, all dominions that have held and do hold empire over men have been and are either republics or principalities'—and Machiavelli nowhere suggests that a principality can ever be a free regime.[78] Seneca's argument had depicted the prince as the 'mind' of the 'body politic', whereas Machiavelli's princes are never integrated into the states they rule but always remain external to them, as his language of princes 'acquiring' states tends to suggest. These differences in turn are generated by Machiavelli's total rejection of the Stoic providential rationalism that underpins Seneca's entire political theory. In Machiavelli's view, not only is Stoic providentialism false but belief in its truth fosters a debilitating psychology, which in turn generates disastrous politics.

On the level of metaphysics, Machiavelli denies Stoic determinism. Chapter 25 begins with Machiavelli noting that he is 'not unaware that many people have held and hold today the opinion that things of the world are governed by *fortuna* and by God in such a way that men have no power to correct them with their prudence'. Such people, he suggests, subscribe to a version of what is known as the 'lazy argument' that has been deployed against the Stoics since antiquity: 'and for this reason they could judge that there is no point in sweating much over things: better to leave oneself to be governed by fate [ma lasciarsi governare alla sorte]'.[79] Machiavelli rejects this view, 'so as not to rule out our free will', implicitly denying the Stoic claim that it is submission to providence that guarantees our freedom, and goes on to state his famous opinion, 'I judge that it might be true that fortune is arbiter of half of our actions, but also that she leaves the other half, or close to it, for us to govern'.[80] *Fortuna* becomes pure contingency once more, and politics correspondingly becomes a far more uncertain and unstable kind of activity. When it comes to political psychology, writes Stacey, 'For Machiavelli, the Senecan view of *Fortuna* so widely endorsed is the height of imprudence, a psychological debility inextricably caught up in the doctrine of princely servitude', the error being 'one of counting so heavily upon a benign rationality that you effectively commit yourself to a slavish dependency upon an illusory master', an attitude that 'threatens to make you dependent on others in a very literal sense.'[81] Seneca's confidence in an underlying moral order and divine benevolence generated a politics of constancy, stressing the importance of holding to one's course in the face of apparent—but only apparent—difficulties and trials. For Machiavelli, by contrast, Stoic constancy precisely disables political prudence; the fundamental truth of politics is that times change, and the prince must know when and how to change with the political weather.[82] Constancy can be another word for obstinacy. There are times when it pays to be 'circumspect' (*respettivo*) and times when one must be impetuous (*impetuoso*). For Seneca, as noted above, *virtus* was a matter of internal fortitude rather than external heroics; Machiavelli shows just how far his vision of princely politics stands from Seneca's when he ultimately declares his preference for the *impetuoso* young prince (to which I return below).[83] To borrow Stacey's words once more, and for the last time, Machiavelli's theory 'violently turns back the tropes of the Senecan account. Machiavelli's prince is not armed with virtue. His virtue is to be armed.'[84]

If Machiavelli's political theory as it is presented in *The Prince* is such a systematic repudiation of the Senecan tradition, at every level from deep metaphysics to what we might call particular policy recommendations, the question arises as to how we might best understand Lipsius's *Politica* as some kind of reply to the Florentine. The first thing to note is that the basic framework of Lipsius's argument looks like the traditional Senecan theory, with a number of familiar themes from that tradition presented and discussed above all in books 1 and 2. So, for example, the very first chapter contains a characteristically Senecan claim about the relationship between virtue and fortune:

> So let us take refuge in virtue, as in an asylum, for virtue alone is quiet and safe, and within *its own power, while everything else is subjected to the tyranny of fortune* [Auct. ad Heren. 4.17]. *Against virtue, however, misfortune, losses and injustice are as powerless as a cloud against the sun* [Seneca, Ep. 92.18.3].

The fourth chapter of the first book presents Lipsius's account of fate, or that '*According to the laws of which the immutable pattern of human affairs is woven*'.[85] The virtues themselves are often treated in conventional ways, too, especially in the second book, which is dominated by a discussion of justice and clemency, described as 'the sun' and 'the moon' of the princely virtues.[86] (The account of the latter is lavishly and unsurprisingly illustrated with quotations from Seneca's *De clementia*.) As in the Senecan tradition, and in opposition to Machiavelli's argument, the prince is again described as being the mind of the body politic, and the address to the world's rulers in the preface posits a direct link between the morals of the prince and those of the people, again a familiar ingredient of the Senecan tradition of political thought: 'Does he lead the way to virtue? We follow. To vice? We retreat. Does he perform his duties well and felicitously? We flourish. Unsuccessfully? We fall or perish with him.'[87]

One way to interpret these aspects of Lipsius's presentation is significantly to discount them—to consider them as superficial or largely rhetorical elements, and to read much of the first three books of the *Politica* as a conventional fireworks display of humanist erudition rather than as any kind of distinctive, interesting, or original political argument. What Lipsius gives us, on this view, is a variation on the Machiavellian theme, but one disguised in Senecan clothing. As Waszink puts it, 'Having carved out for himself a good moral persona, or "ethos", by carefully adhering to traditional morality, Lipsius in the last three books comes to discuss and defend practical prudence, reason of state (though not by that word), *prudentia mixta*, and a limited use of deceit if it serves the common good'.[88] It is the second half of the *Politica*—Waszink calls this 'the realistic half of the book'—and especially the argument of book 4 that present the most distinctively Lipsian political thought; indeed, on this view, the first chapter of book 4 can be read as a 'new preface', introducing the theme of the prince's own personal prudence, with which Lipsius will be preoccupied for the rest of the work.[89]

To a considerable extent, this is an attractive way to read the *Politica*. Some of the early discussions do tend towards the platitudinous, for example, that of clemency in book 2. Lipsius begins book 1 by patiently setting out a series of distinctions in the characteristic manner of the sixteenth-century logician Peter Ramus. Virtue is divided into two branches, faith and goodness; faith in turn is divided into belief and worship, and its 'two shoots' are the acceptance of fate and conscience, and so on. But it is plausible to think that these are not to be taken especially seriously, for the distinctions themselves do not play much of a role in the political argument that follows, and elsewhere Lipsius wrote that 'never will he be great for whom Ramus is great'.[90] Insofar as the view we are considering prioritises the argument of *Politica* 4, and therefore the more 'Machiavellian' aspects of Lipsius's theory of politics, we should recall Lipsius's disinclination to alter the text of key passages on lying and religion in response to the objections of the Vatican. There are other ways, too, in which the more conventionally anti-Machiavellian moments of the earlier part of the work give way to something else a little later. Machiavelli's critics had been alarmed by his separation of prudence from conventional ideas about moral virtue,[91] and it appears from book 1 of the *Politica* that Lipsius agreed with them and was anxious to present his two 'Leaders' (*Rectores*) of civil life, 'Prudence and Virtue', as being closely intertwined. Virtue, we are told in 1.1, is a necessary condition for prudence, for in the absence of virtue what would otherwise be called prudence can only be 'cunning and malice' (calliditas ea sit et malitia).[92] Prudence, we are told in 1.7, is a necessary condition for virtue ('what Virtue can there be without Prudence?'), given that 'Virtue consists entirely in Selection and Moderation', and, '[s]ince these cannot exist without Prudence, Virtue cannot'.[93] On the other hand, one of the component parts of virtue is 'goodness', which Lipsius considers 'does not strictly speaking belong to this structure of politics' (1.6, quia in hoc Civili aedificio proprie non ei locus), and in the third book he threatens to undermine his own analytic separation of prudence and virtue altogether when he quotes Aristotle approvingly as saying that 'prudence is the ruler's characteristic and sole virtue'.[94]

It would be too swift, however, to dismiss these conventional elements in the *Politica* as just so much rhetoric concealing the true Machiavellian teaching. To do so would be to obscure the way in which these components of the argument do not constitute a pure restatement of the traditional Senecan political theory but rather are building blocks in the construction of a modified Senecan framework, which in fact is what allows the text to function both as a critical response to as well as a partial appropriation of Machiavellian political theory.

Take Lipsius's treatment of fate in 1.4. As we have seen, Machiavelli rejected Stoic determinism in the twenty-fifth chapter of *The Prince*, 'so that our free will not be eliminated'.[95] Lipsius's approach to fate, by contrast, is to yoke the question of its existence to Christian piety rather than to Stoic physics. The acceptance of fate is one of the 'shoots' of faith 'which rise up under this tree'; it 'clearly originates in Belief'.[96] Lipsius denies that he is making an argument about strict causal determinism. Indeed, he says of those who do make such an argument, or who prefer to appeal to astrology, that 'they rave' (*delirant*).[97] Lipsius emphasises the role of God, '[f]or if God rules and directs, then He also foresees and decides', so that fate is, in Augustine's words in *The City of God 5.9*, the 'decree and the voice so to speak of the divine order'. The utility of linking the question of fate to divine decree and divine foreknowledge rather than to any kind of physical necessity is that this move gave Lipsius enough space to assert that he was not denying free will at all, an insistence that was strengthened in the later editions after the Vatican objected that 1.4 was still a bit too Stoic for its liking.[98] We saw earlier how Machiavelli gestured at the so-called lazy argument against Stoic fate. In the chapter on fate, as if by way of reply, Lipsius presents a standard Stoic reply to this objection (as he had done in the parallel discussion of Stoic fate in the earlier *De constantia* 1.22, though in the *Politica* he does not employ the technical Stoic language of 'co-fatedness'):

> Then what? You will ask. Should I do nothing, and leave everything to fate? A foolish thought. Yes indeed, you will tread the path which leads to your destiny, and this too happens out of necessity.[99]

As with Machiavelli's earlier treatment of the same topic, there is nothing philosophically deep here, but where Machiavelli's remarks formed part of his campaign to weaken one of the pillars of the Senecan worldview, Lipsius moves to provide some support, chiefly by making it harder to oppose providentialism without being openly irreligious, but also by denying that the consequences follow that so many have found objectionable: the denial of free will, on the one hand, or the point of trying to do anything at all on the other.

Or take the Senecan claim that the prince is in an important sense the mind of the body politic. In *De clementia* this was a part of an argument whose conclusion was that the Romans were still free, though living under kings, because the *princeps* provided rational direction to the political community. This was an argument, furthermore, which also required the idea that this Roman monarchy enjoyed universal jurisdiction, on the grounds that if it did not, the structural analogy of the prince to the Stoic wise man (*sapiens*) would be bound to fail. Lipsius accepts the analogy, but in his hands it may not be much more than an analogy. So, for example, in the epistle dedicated to the world's rulers, in a passage referred to earlier, he asserts that 'just as in a body the spirit cannot be healthy or unhealthy without strength or weakness at the same time taking hold of its functions, neither can the Prince be well or ill, without similar consequences'.[100] Or, as part of his defence of monarchy in 2.2, Lipsius remarks that '*it seems that one body politic should be governed by one soul*. Like one ship by one captain.'[101] Lipsius does not, however, embrace either of the strong Stoic claims. We might say, with Waszink, that Lipsius 'transferred Stoic ideas about the universality of mankind, governed by a cosmic plan, to the universality of the realm, governed by a prudent prince', for he nowhere suggests that the prince is a universal monarch, let alone any kind of sage.[102] He never claims, furthermore, that the subjects of princely rule are free, a striking agreement with Machiavelli's argument in *The Prince*. (This particular point was obscured to English readers of the *Politica*, for William Jones rendered a fragment of Seneca in 2.6 as 'the thraldome of thy subiects is not committed unto thee, but their libertie, defence and protection', though the word *libertas* did not appear in the original text [civium non servitutem tibi traditam, sed tutelam].[103] As various commentators have observed, Lipsius has little to say about liberty in his political writings.)

But this is about as far as the Machiavellism goes here. Machiavelli's denial that the subjects of a prince retain their liberty is part of his effort to drive a wedge between the prince and his principality and to treat the former as standing outside the latter and owing nothing to it. The prince and his principality do not make up a harmonious whole; rather, the one 'acquires' the other and uses it in the service of his—not its—ends. Although Lipsius may agree that the prince's subjects are not politically free, he nevertheless still insists, against Machiavelli, that the well-constituted state is an integrated unity of the prince and the people. Machiavelli in *The Prince* is chiefly interested in the 'new prince' who comes to power either through *virtù* (which is to say, by dint of his own arms) or *fortuna* (by dint of other people's), and he has little to say about hereditary principalities. Lipsius, by contrast, is only interested in considering the prince who obtains his throne through the operation of the appropriate domestic constitutional mechanisms, 'in accordance with law and custom', either by election or through legitimate succession.[104] 'Whichever of these is the right one', Lipsius contends, 'all other ways are not right: for *no one has by good means exercised a power that he had obtained disgracefully*'.[105] The Machiavellian prince treats his principality as a resource to be exploited in his quest for glory; the Lipsian prince ought to work, by contrast and fully in line with the Senecan tradition, for the '*bonum publicum*' which is 'nothing other than the subjects' welfare, safety, and salvation',[106] and to have, in Cicero's words, 'the happy life of its citizens for his aim'.[107]

In the famous discussion of 'mixed prudence'—that is, of prudence mixed with some kind of deceit—Lipsius argues that it is permissible for the prince 'to depart slightly from human laws; but only in order to preserve his position, never to extend it. For *Necessity, being a great defender of the weakness of man, breaks every law*.'[108] Richard Tuck acutely commented on this passage that here 'Lipsius captured exactly the difference between these late sixteenth-century theorists and Machiavelli, or what they took the difference to be', that '[l]aws could be broken for *preservation*, but not for any other reason, such as the enhancement of a ruler's or his country's *glory*'.[109] That is correct, though it seems to me that this position flows fairly straightforwardly from the modified Senecan standpoint I've sketched above, one that urges on the prince the pursuit of the common good, which is understood specifically in terms of the safety of the subject population. For Tuck, by contrast, it is Lipsius's 'sympathy with scepticism' that generates above all his interest in prioritising preservation (and especially self-preservation) over other goods,[110] but this is a view that seems problematic to me in at least two respects. First, Tuck had suggested that the argument about fate or providence in *De constantia* was 'dependent in some ways on the notion of self-interest: for Lipsius was concerned to stress that the sheer intractability of external events means that men are usually *necessitated* to act in certain ways—the necessitation coming from the combination of unalterable fate and the need to protect oneself'.[111] Yet it is hard to make the claim that *De constantia* champions a politics of self-preservation in quite this way, given that the character 'Lipsius' in the dialogue is presented as someone whose concern for self-preservation is precisely what has induced him to leave the war-torn Low Countries for the safety of Vienna, and it is the argument of his interlocutor 'Langius' that aims to persuade him that self-mastery, in particular the control of the passions and the cultivation of the virtue of constancy, is a significantly more important goal than any mere considerations of bodily self-preservation: death, for example, is described in properly Stoic fashion as one of the 'false evils'.[112] Second, as Anthony Levi has argued, it is more plausible to interpret Lipsius's occasional favourable references to Sceptical arguments not as indicating any broadly sympathetic orientation towards Scepticism of his own but rather specifically as a tactical move to downplay or deny the most obviously un-Christian implications of the more Stoic arguments he was advancing elsewhere—concerning the omnipotence of the wise man, for example, or the impossibility of his sinning.[113]

What, then, of Machiavelli's charge that Stoic politics disables prudence? We have seen part of Lipsius's reply already: prudence is a matter of choice, but where Machiavelli charged that Stoic fate denies the exercise of choice, Lipsius denied this, with his assertion of the compatibility of fate and free will through his emphasis on understanding fate in terms of divine foreknowledge rather than causal determinism. Machiavelli's further charge was that the distinctive Stoic virtue of constancy was disastrous for prudence, as good politics requires the kind of flexibility constancy precludes. Lipsius's countersuggestion is that Stoic constancy is distinctively the virtue of the *subject*, as he had argued in *De constantia* and as he reminds his reader at the start of the *Politica*, where he writes that in that work, he has 'equipped citizens for endurance and obedience',[114] or a virtue of the *counsellor*, arguing in 3.5 that there are five specific virtues a good counsellor needs to cultivate, these being faith (*pietas*), independence (*libertas*), constancy (*constantia*), modesty (*modestia*), and discretion (*silentio*).[115] Lipsius also requests that the character of the government (*forma imperii*) be 'Stern, Constant and Limited'.[116] What he means by constancy here is conservatism with respect to legislation: the prince is exhorted not to tamper with existing laws unless it is absolutely necessary to do so.[117] In the sphere of policy rather than legislation, however, Lipsius nowhere suggests that the kind of constancy that the older Senecan tradition had celebrated and Machiavelli had despised was any kind of specifically princely virtue.

For both Lipsius and Machiavelli, as for other writers, prudence is the art of making good choices. Lipsius indeed defines prudence as 'the understanding and choosing of what is to be sought or avoided, both in private and in public';[118] prudence, suggests Machiavelli, 'consists in knowing how to recognize the qualities of inconveniences, and in picking the less bad as good'.[119] Again, for Machiavelli, for Lipsius, and for other humanists, the cultivation of prudence requires above all knowledge of and reflection on history, especially classical history. Machiavelli's masterpiece was—to give it its full title—*Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livy*. Lipsius had written in his dedication of his 1574 edition of

Tacitus to Emperor Maximilian that 'Tacitus is a penetrating writer, God knows, and a prudent one: and if ever there was a time when men could profit from reading him, it is now',[120] and there are over five hundred quotations from his writings in the *Politica*—more than twice as many as from Seneca, the next most frequently quoted author—243 from the *Annals*, 219 from the *Histories*, 44 from the *Agricola*, and 22 from the *Germania*.[121]

Machiavelli and Lipsius agree that the study of the ancient historians is a vital element in the cultivation of prudence, and that whereas reflection on history can generate valuable maxims for the prince, these are maxims, not general rules with universal application. Part of prudence is knowing good maxims, and an even more important part of prudence is knowing when to act on them and when not. 'The Prudence I want to be in the Prince himself', writes Lipsius at the start of book 4, 'is hard to bind down to rules', for 'of particular affairs, there is an infinite number', and because 'what we call Prudence is in reality unstable and changeable in every respect', '[f]or what else is it, than a selecting and combining of things which relate to each other now in this way, then in that way?'[122] Political enquiry cannot manufacture anything that we could plausibly call knowledge, which deals in certainties; nevertheless, although Lipsius 'and other writers grope about in darkness', he refuses to 'remain silent' but will do the best he can.[123] For Machiavelli, too, the study of history can generate maxims, and *The Prince* and the *Discourses* are full of these, but more important than maxims are the examples of political leaders to imitate (or not, as the case may be).[124]

The personal prudence of the prince is critically important for both writers, but the Lipsian prince receives far more assistance from outside sources. In Lipsius's rendering of prudence, its 'parents' are *use* (experience) and *memory* or *remembrance* (*memoria*), and much of the latter can be codified and presented to the prince in books such as the *Politica*. Since the Lipsian prince is less likely to be a man of singular excellence—Lipsius favours hereditary succession, after all, which is not known to be a reliable mechanism for securing outstanding political qualities in the ruler—one thing the prince does need to learn is how to take good advice, and much of book 3 of the *Politica* is devoted to examining the roles of ministers and counsellors. Machiavelli's interest is in the new prince who comes to power through his own arms, in other words, one who is far more likely to possess striking political abilities, and he cautions against the prince relying on advice from anybody. Either the counsellor will be more prudent than the prince, in which case he cannot be trusted not to take advantage of his boss, or he will be less prudent, in which case there is nothing to be gained by listening to his advice, let alone by acting on it.[125] It would be a gross exaggeration to think that Lipsius gives us a description of the workings of an impersonal state bureaucracy, for his prince remains the central political actor, but his account nevertheless marks a departure from Machiavelli's single-minded emphasis on the rule, and role, of *uno solo*.

Machiavelli and Lipsius clearly disagree on the ends of political action, as we have seen. Lipsius's prince aims at serving the common good, understood in terms of the security and welfare of the subject population; Machiavelli's prince acts to secure his own glory. These divergent ends shape the kind of princely behaviour that each writer encourages, to the extent, I think, that it is reasonable to employ one of Machaivelli's own distinctions to illuminate the contrast. In the twenty-fifth chapter of *The Prince*, in the celebrated discussion of *Fortuna*, Machiavelli describes two kinds of princes, one who proceeds 'with caution' (*con respetto*), the other 'with impetuosity' (*con impeto*),[126] and whether each flourishes or fails depends entirely on what Machiavelli calls 'the quality of the times'. An ideal prince would be one who could choose to be either *respettivo* or *impetuoso* according to the nature of the times in which he found himself embroiled, but Machiavelli thinks this is impossible: no man is 'so prudent as to know how to accommodate himself to this, whether because he cannot deviate from what nature inclines him to or also because, when one has always flourished by walking on one path, he cannot be persuaded to depart from it'.[127] Given that a prince has to be one or the other and that neither disposition can be guaranteed to succeed, Machiavelli plumps unhesitatingly for the latter, notoriously because

> fortune is a woman: and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly. And so, always like a woman, she is the friend of the young, because they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity.[128]

There's nothing in the *Politica* to suggest that Lipsius favours this kind of impetuosity. Indeed, his stern warnings against temerity might very well stand in for his opinions on the Machaivellian *impetuoso* prince. In the longest discussion of temerity, in 5.5, Lipsius insists that rashness (*temeritas*) 'must be absent from the beginnings of war', asserting, 'War is a matter of great weight: it demands deliberation, and slow deliberation',[129] and reporting various classical authorities as saying, 'be sure that every war is started easily, but is then very difficult to end', 'that even a just war must be abhorred', and that one should 'neither provoke war, nor fear it'.[130] When it comes to waging war, one must act with caution.

Machiavelli criticises *temerità*, too, but a survey of his examples suggests that the two writers deploy the notion in significantly different ways. Machiavelli uses the language of rashness in a number of ways, but most characteristically to describe courses of action that create situations in which the prince is quite unnecessarily exposed to great danger or puts himself into the power of another. In *The Prince*, for example, Machiavelli criticises the Venetians' rashness for bringing the far more powerful king of France into Italy, so that while they secured a small amount of new territory in Lombardy, he grabbed much of the rest of northern Italy;[131] or Antoninus Caracalla, who 'had put to death with disgrace a brother of that centurion, and threatened him every day; yet he kept him in his bodyguard, which was a rash policy likely to bring ruin, as happened to him', when the centurion subsequently killed him.[132] The *Discourses* contain the marvellous story of Pope Julius II and Giavampagolo Baglioni, the tyrant of Perugia. The impeccably *impetuoso* Julius, 'carried along by that fury with which he governed all things', 'put himself with a single guard in the hands of his enemy', so that the 'prudent men who were with the pope'—these included Machiavelli himself—thought the pope to have shown *temerità* for exposing himself to such danger and Giovampagolo *viltà* (cowardice) for not having taken advantage of the situation and killing the pope when he was in his power.[133] The judgement of *temerità*, however, pertains not to the pope's characteristic hastiness or aggressiveness in general, however much these qualities might have helped to generate his behaviour at Bologna, but specifically to his making himself vulnerable to his enemy. Lipsius's notion of *temeritas* is far broader than that, including many of what Machiavelli would consider the most praiseworthy elements of impetuosity itself.

We might say, then, that one substantial difference between Machiavelli and Lipsius when it comes to political prudence concerns their respective attitudes to risk. Both can agree that 'when times are quiet' the prince ought to be building the metaphorical 'dikes and dams' against the possibility of the river of fortune flooding its banks.[134] But having made these kinds of preparations, the most impressive prince for Machiavelli is the one who plays for the highest stakes and who is prepared to bet everything on an uncertain outcome, especially when it involves audacious belligerence. Lipsius's prince isn't enjoined to engage in anything like this kind of high-stakes aggression, and when he writes (to quote the fine words of William Jones's English translation) that 'All things yeeld obedience vnto Prudence, euen Fortune her selfe',[135] one can't help thinking that this is nothing like Machiavelli's counsel for the *impetuoso* prince with respect to *Fortuna* but rather the prudence he is recommending is that which systematically contains the risks the *respettivo* prince faces, playing the percentages in order to grind out a victory against fortune over the long run.

## CODA: SITUATING LIPSIUS

In his well-known lecture of 1 February 1978, Michel Foucault gave an account of what he called the 'enormous literature on government' that 'explodes in the middle of the sixteenth century', and we are now well placed to see where Lipsius's *Politica* stands in relation to that body of work.[136] It is always tempting, after all, to draw connections between Lipsius's project and Foucault's. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, the earliest examples of the disciplinary model of social institutions that Foucault considers are military manuals from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, which were to some extent plagiarised from Lipsius's writings on warfare, though Lipsius is not mentioned in that book,[137] and it is striking that Foucault told his audience at the Collège de France at the start of the lecture on governmentality that '[t]he sixteenth century return to Stoicism revolves around this reactualization of the problem of how to govern oneself'.[138] Foucault describes the literature on government, furthermore, as standing in a self-consciously critical relationship to Machiavelli's *Prince*, which he calls a '*point de répulsion*' for the genre.[139] In particular, the works on government rejected the idea that 'the Prince exists in a relationship of singularity and externality, of transcendence, to his principality',[140] such that, for Machiavelli, 'What is to be protected is the principality as the relationship of the Prince to his subjects and his territory, and not directly, immediately, fundamentally, or primarily, the territory and its inhabitants'.[141]

So far, so Lipsian, but perhaps not that much farther, as it is at about this point that the discontinuities between the government literature as Foucault describes it and the *Politica* become apparent. The works on government 'do not exactly present themselves as advice to the prince, nor yet as political science', though this is a phrase that does work quite well as a rough description of the *Politica*. For Foucault, 'The art of government essentially appears in this literature as having to answer the question of how to introduce economy—that is to say, the proper way of managing individuals, goods, and wealth . . . —how to introduce this meticulous attention, this type of relationship between the father and the family, into the management of the state?'[142] Lipsius, on the other hand, is almost completely silent about economic life and says nothing about the management of other parts of the society, whether fathers governing their families or with respect to any other kind of what Rousseau would much later call ‘partial associations’. Concerning the literature on government, Foucault describes the way in which the juridical language of sovereignty and the common good gets replaced by a language of arranging things in the right way in order to lead them to ‘an end suitable for each of the things to be governed’[143]—yet as we have seen, Lipsius repeatedly deploys the language of the common or public good in the *Politica*.

Even here, however, we can plausibly read the *Politica* as a transitional text, rooted in the advice-to-princes literature but leaning strongly towards the literature on government. First, Lipsius may not say much—indeed, anything at all—about economic life, but he is clear that *commercium* does make up one-half of civil life, just not the half that will be considered in the *Politica*, which is *imperium*.[144] Second, Foucault considered the jurists’ notions of sovereignty generated a circle: ‘[W]hat does this common good . . . which is regularly invoked by jurists and laid down as the very end of sovereignty comprise?’, he asked, and answered, ‘They say that the common good exists when all subjects obey the law without fail’, so that ‘the end of sovereignty is circular; it refers back to the exercise of sovereignty’, something that he thought was ‘not so far removed from Machiavelli saying that the Prince’s main objective must be to preserve his principality; we always come back to this circular relationship of sovereignty, or the principality, to itself’.[145] It’s hard to convict the *Politica* of the same kind of circularity: the juridical language of sovereignty isn’t much in evidence, and when Lipsius does appeal to the idea of the common good, his appeal lacks this circular structure, defining the common good in terms of ‘welfare, safety, and salvation’ (*commodum, securitas, salus*),[146] goals not far removed from what Foucault would go on to call the terrain of biopolitics. There is, in truth, not much on the laws in the *Politica*, beyond Lipsius’s appeal to the prince to keep them much as they are.[147]

If the key concern of governmentality is, as Gorski has put it, ‘the manner in which the conduct of an ensemble of individuals becomes implicated to a greater and greater degree in the exercise of state power’,[148] it is striking to note just how little Lipsius has to say about conduct. He says almost nothing about the way in which civilians will or ought to behave in a well-governed principality, and while interpreters like Oestreich have suggested that for Lipsius, the army is a template for the organisation of the rest of society, we ought to reject this view. Lipsius does explain how discipline is to be achieved in the army in book 5 of the *Politica*, but it is a strange kind of wishful thinking, substantially short of textual evidence, to project this explanation onto the body of the society as a whole. Lipsius might have recommended the importance of citizens’ disciplining their own passions in the earlier *De constantia*, with various military metaphors in play throughout that work, but what is described there is a story about the capacities of rational citizens to discipline themselves, not a story in which state power is implicated in the disciplining of the population to any significant degree. Indeed, contrary to Lipsius's reputation as a social disciplinarian, we might plausibly think that his combination in the *Politica* of a relative silence about the lives of ordinary citizens together with his insistence on the merits of a professional standing army in place of any citizen militia in practice reduces the state's disciplinary role vis-à-vis the bulk of the male citizenry, who will not, after all, periodically be having to appear on the parade ground for military drill.

While the *Politica* has affinities with the literature on government, then, and perhaps even a significant tendency in that direction, it belongs far more comfortably within somewhat old-fashioned notions of the mainstream of the tradition of political thought, poised theoretically as well as chronologically between Machiavelli and Hobbes. With respect to Machiavelli, we have explored the ways in which Lipsius can be read as offering a reply to the Florentine's critique of Senecan political thought. With respect to Hobbes, we have seen any number of proto-Hobbesian themes in play in Lipsius's argument, whether the concern for peace and the physical security of the population, or the development of a prudence around the notions of use and memory, or the disinclination to consider the subjects of a sovereign as being free in anything like the traditional republican sense, or support for the state's authority over the religious sphere, or the strong opposition to a politics and psychology of glory. Before considering the passage from Lipsius to Hobbes in the third chapter, however, we need to turn our attention to Hugo Grotius and to the origins of the modern natural rights tradition in a reworking of Ciceronian Stoicism. This is the subject of the second chapter.

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