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DOI

[10.1080/01916599.2022.2084634](https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2022.2084634)

Publication date

2022

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

History of European Ideas

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Citation for published version (APA):

Kattenberg, L. (2022). Reading Lipsius in early modern Italy: Ercole Cato and the transformation of the *Politicorum Libri Sex*. *History of European Ideas*, 48(7), 1021-1038. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2022.2084634>

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Reading Lipsius in early modern Italy: Ercole Cato and the transformation of the *Politicorum Libri Sex*

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ABSTRACT

Navigating the tension between moral virtue and realism in a ruler's effort to preserve power, Justus Lipsius' *Politicorum libri sex* (1589) was a foundational text in Catholic reason of state, but its ambiguous form and content leave it open for interpretation. The present article shows how in his Italian translation, the Ferrarese secretary and scholar Ercole Cato offers an individual reading of the *Politica*, transforming it to underline its usefulness and enhance its orthodoxy. Through a creative use of examples from ancient and modern history, Cato presented Lipsius' political prudence as one that rejected political calculation without virtue, and placed in direct dialogue with contemporary political events. This article argues that in reshaping and expanding the *Politica*, Cato presented his own intervention in the debate on Catholic reason of state, and it suggests that translators like Cato should be taken seriously as active and inventive participants in early modern political languages.



KEYWORDS

Justus Lipsius; Ercole Cato; Reason of State; Machiavelli; Scholarship; Translation

1. Introduction

The early modern language of Catholic reason of state was notoriously slippery. In their attempts to unite the politically useful with the just, authors explored the boundaries of orthodoxy, while carefully avoiding the stain of 'Machiavellism'.¹ As a result, key texts of Catholic reason of state were often ambiguous and enigmatic, and none more so than Justus Lipsius' *Politicorum Libri Sex* or *Six Books of Politics* (*Politica*, 1589). Centring on political prudence, it was intended as a guide to princes on how to preserve peace and stability amid the challenges of modern political life, while balancing moral virtue and political realism.² The *Politica* thus posed as a mirror for princes, just like Machiavelli's *The Prince* had done. At first glance, however, it more closely resembled a commonplace book: it was a patchwork of hundreds of quotations and *sententiae*, strung together loosely by the author's own voice.³ While this allowed Lipsius to hide behind the authority of others in presenting some of his more subversive opinions, it also left much of the content open for the interpretation of individual readers, present-day as well as contemporary. One of these contemporary readers was the Ferrarese secretary and humanist Ercole Cato, and the evidence of his reading lies in his Italian translation of the *Politica* (1618).

Ercole Cato and his oeuvre have received little scholarly attention, and he has never been included in the historiography of reason of state. While Cato's controversial translation of *De la demonomanie des sorciers* is usually mentioned in studies on the Italian reception of Bodin,

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the only sustained effort to understand Cato as a translator has been made by Maria Elena Severini in a recent study on Cato's translation of Louis le Roy's *Douze livres de la vicissitude ou variété des choses de l'univers*.⁴ Though highly useful, this scholarship has largely concentrated on the reception, diffusion and impact of the translated originals, topics which have also dominated the study of translation in intellectual history more broadly. Historians have pointed out how translations played a crucial role in defining an early modern European 'canon' of cultural and political ideologies; reflected national specifications of discourses; and contributed to the transnational standardization of key concepts, values and texts.⁵ Moreover, translations have been considered valuable as evidence of the translator's individual reading.⁶ Grafton and Jardine have long since demonstrated how individual responses to political histories highlight the elemental link which contemporaries acknowledged between texts and real life.⁷ More recently, Saül Martínez Bermejo has pointed out that translations became the point of departure for many new readings that were constrained or mediated by their characteristics, and often encouraged an interpretation of the original in one direction or another.⁸ This last part was crucial especially in the case of controversial texts.

This article argues that in reshaping and expanding the *Politica*, Cato presented his own contribution to the language of reason of state. Besides translating the Latin original, Cato also added substantial discourses or *annotazioni* to each chapter, which commented on Lipsius' text using a wide range of examples from ancient and modern history. Cato's interpretation of Lipsius' ambiguous text connected it explicitly to concrete politics, both in the past and in his present-day Europe, and enhanced the orthodoxy of this controversial work of political thought. The article first explores Cato's career in politics and his scholarly enterprise, and then moves on to his activity as a translator. Next, it places Cato's *Politica* in the context of his other translations, and shows how Lipsius' Latin original was reshaped during various stages of its production in order to align it more closely with Roman Catholic orthodoxy. Here we can draw on an early manuscript of the translated text and annotations, which also contains corrections and additions in Cato's own hand.⁹ Third, situating Cato's *Politica* within the context of Catholic reason of state and its ambiguous relationship with Machiavelli, I show how Cato articulated his own ideas about politics, morality and prudence through careful play with historical examples.

Cato's work provides fresh insight into the tension between realism and moral boundaries that was at the heart of Catholic reason of state, and into the material and discursive strategies which authors employed to navigate orthodoxy. Because there is an original to compare, authorial and editorial choices on this point are often more detectable in translations than in other types of text. I argue that translators like Cato deserve to be taken seriously as active and inventive participants in early modern political languages. Especially in reason of state, they broaden the scope of study beyond a relatively limited canon of political philosophers, and, as agents, they enable a closer approach to the interaction between ideas and political practice.¹⁰

2. Agent, scholar, polemicist

The Cati were a minor noble family from Lendinara, which had been under the control of the Duchy of Ferrara since the late thirteenth century. There is no surviving record of Ercole Cato's baptism or death, but we know he died at the age of 68 and not before 1606, and that he was one of four sons of Ludovico Cato and Ippolita Nigrisoli.¹¹ Like his father and his older brother Renato, Ercole Cato dedicated most of his working life to the service of the ruling Este dukes.¹² In 1563 he entered the service of Cardinal Ippolito II as a secretary, and followed the Cardinal on his travels and visits to Rome, Tivoli and Florence. When the Cardinal died in 1572, Cato read a eulogy for Ippolito during his funeral in Tivoli, which he published in amplified version in Ferrara in 1587.¹³ Ippolito left him some property and a pension of 100 *scudi*, although the actual payment was irregular and Cato regularly complained about the money not coming through.¹⁴ He seems to have been without an employer for a while, living off his annuity and spending time in

Lendinara on his studies, but archival records show that by the late 1580s, Cato had started working as a secretary to Duke Alfonso II d'Este of Ferrara.¹⁵

Judging from the surviving evidence, Cato's position seems to have been of a middling sort: he never rose to the highest positions, but he did have some powerful connections and was aware of the intimate politics at court. His most important contact was Giovanni Battista Laderchi, private secretary to the Duke and a member of the *Consiglio Segreto*, a group of his trusted advisers.¹⁶ Although Cato's correspondence with Laderchi was mostly professional, occasionally personal notes provide glimpses of the trust and affection that existed between them; when illness prevented Cato from following the court in 1592, it was Laderchi who received his complaints about how hard it was to work with everybody who mattered far away and not knowing what was going on.¹⁷ Cato's duties mostly consisted of the traditional tasks of a secretary, such as forwarding letters and minutes, supplying documentary information and transmitting requests. He followed the Este court to Florence, Parma and Rome, and was attentive to political developments both within the Italian peninsula and beyond.¹⁸

Duke Alfonso died on 27 October 1597 without direct heirs, which meant that legally Ferrara was to return to the Church. Alfonso's nephew Cesare d'Este initially claimed the rights of succession, and he sent the brothers Ercole and Renato Cato on an unsuccessful mission to Venice to seek support against the papal claim.¹⁹ Pope Clement VIII held a sumptuous entry in Ferrara on 29 January 1598 and installed his nephew Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini as governor.²⁰ During the first years of the rule of the 'ecclesiastici' Cato claimed to be unhappy and unsuccessfully attempted to re-enter the service of the Estes.²¹ Yet during his final years Cato came to enjoy the protection of the papal legate, and in 1604 the Pope named him an official noble and council member of the city of Ferrara. With the support of Aldobrandini he co-founded the *Accademia degli Intrepidi*, a Ferrarese society for the arts and humanities. Shortly after its foundation he read a discourse there on the proper education of young princes, copies of which he sent to Laderchi and to Cesare d'Este, whose young son still needed to learn that 'who has to rule states, should use his intelligence.'²²

Parallel to his duties as a secretary, Cato seriously dedicated himself to learning and the arts.²³ He entertained strong views on what a good scholarship entailed. Under a pseudonym he published the remarkable *Apologia sopra l'Historia del sig. Andrea Nizolio* (1584), a critical appraisal of the history of Rovigo written by the lawyer Andrea Nicolio, first published in 1582.²⁴ Throughout the work, Cato revisited the requirements of the true scholar of history which, in his opinion, Nicolio lacked. Cato believed that in order to ensure accuracy, a scholar needed to possess detailed knowledge of the world and other historical writings and although he should never utter outright falsehoods, Cato also believed that 'he might well go and veil many truths.'²⁵ The strong opinions about history reappear in the manuscript marginal notes that Cato wrote in his original copy of the *History of Rovigo*. Some criticize Nicolio's style and grammar ('Parenthesis too long as well as inappropriate for the subject of the history'), but most of all, Cato was concerned with accuracy.²⁶ He raised objections when Nicolio's evidence conflicted with other sources. For instance, in a comment on Nicolio's statement that the area around Rovigo had been populated by 'Noah and his descendants', Cato pointed out that this assertion conflicted with the evidence in Genesis 10:32: 'If the author means, that Noah came to Italy, this is false, for it were his descendants who divided the peoples after the Flood, not he; gens.cap.x'.²⁷ Often, Cato believed that Nicolio just had 'no reason nor authority' to prove his point.²⁸

If Cato had a reason beyond scholarly considerations to write a polemic about this particular book, no record of it has survived. His fierce marginalia and ungenerous review can be understood in the context of the late-sixteenth-century trend among humanists of treating history as an analytical discipline, which was accompanied by practices of critically reading and cross-referencing histories others had written.²⁹ Yet for Cato, who united scholarship with a life of action, accuracy in history had a further value: he viewed historical examples as principal contributors to present-day politics and statecraft. Reasoning from examples, both ancient and modern, was at the heart of the

reason of state of Machiavelli, Lipsius and Botero; both Lipsius and Botero emphasized the importance of history for a statesman by calling history the ‘source’ or ‘mother of prudence’, although in the *Politica*, Lipsius borrowed from the classics only.³⁰ As new methods in humanist scholarship increasingly led to a questioning of the value and meaning of (classical) examples, however, an acute awareness arose that classical texts were a product of their own time.³¹ In the Italian *Politica* Cato openly questioned the reliability of ancient sources, which ‘for the shadows in which they are enveloped, are perhaps not in everything convenient for the use in our very different times.’³² Thus when Cato set out to translate, he read Lipsius against the background of both ancient and modern history, connecting the often abstract *sententiae* to a concrete world of sixteenth-century politics.

3. Cato as a translator

Erocole Cato’s main intellectual output consisted of translations. The first was an Italian edition of Charles Estienne’s *Preadium rusticum* (1554), which appeared in 1581 and went through at least six editions over the next hundred years.³³ Most notorious was his 1587 translation of Jean Bodin’s *De la demonomanie des sorciers*, which was placed on the Roman Index shortly after its appearance.³⁴ Particularly useful in understanding Cato’s role as a translator and his reading of Lipsius is his translation of *Douze livres de la vicissitude ou variété des choses de l’univers* (1576) by the French humanist Louis le Roy.³⁵ In this universal history of civilizations, Le Roy presented a conception of history that aimed to unite general movements with the contingency of particulars, represented by a wide range of examples from ancient and modern history. As Severini has demonstrated in her modern edition of Cato’s translation, both the creation and impact of Le Roy’s original *Vicissitude* were shaped by the intense cultural contact between France and the Italian states during the second half of the sixteenth century.³⁶ The Italian *Politica* was Cato’s last translation, and he never lived to see it published. We know from the manuscript that Cato started working on it in the 1590s, but it was his son Lodovico who finally brought the translation to print in 1618.³⁷ As Lodovico explained in the preliminary work, his father had been prevented from publishing by ‘various mishaps, and finally death.’³⁸

Why did Cato take up translating in the first place? For one thing, he received encouragement from several fronts. According to his address to the reader in the Italian *Politica*, Cato had been encouraged to translate this work by his Este masters.³⁹ Particularly productive was the collaboration with the Venetian publishers Aldo Manuzio and Niccolò Manassi, with whom most of Cato’s oeuvre appeared. Cato and his publishers shared a particular interest in didactic and literary works, as well as political-historical ones.⁴⁰ Yet for Cato, translating also had value in itself. In the address to the reader of his *Vicissitudine* he stated that, although translators did not usually receive the same praise as original authors, he was proud to add to the Italian vernacular and to ‘encourage others to enrich our most happy Italian language with an abundance of new books.’⁴¹ Cato appeared to echo Le Roy himself, who had argued that translating was an accomplishment that required authentic spirit, and spurned those who held classical languages in higher regard than modern European vernaculars.⁴²

As for Cato’s specific choices of which works to translate, a prominent factor appears to have been their perceived social-political usefulness. Cato presented Le Roy’s collection of essays about the ordeals of life and the changeability of the universe as particularly appropriate in present-day Europe, and he recommended the *Politica* for its ‘usefulness and timely benefit.’⁴³ In fact, Le Roy’s *Vicissitudes* and Lipsius *Politica* had both been born out of the political, religious and cultural crises and the violent conflicts that shook Europe during the sixteenth century. Le Roy finished his work in 1575, just as King Henry III had achieved a short-lived peace in the French civil wars. In his dedication to Henry, Le Roy emphasized that only a situation of peace and quiet could serve the good of the French state and the common interest of Christianity, as well as enable the advancement of society and the development of the arts and sciences. As Severini points out, Le Roy’s philosophy of history was to a large extent an answer to the crises he had experienced. It

acknowledged that in universal history order and chaos must coexist, and Le Roy's faith in progress was always accompanied by an awareness of the instability and fragility of a world eternally plagued by disorder.⁴⁴ Le Roy's view of history had in fact been importantly influenced by Machiavelli and Guicciardini, who had themselves responded to the social and political unrest in the sixteenth-century Italian states.⁴⁵

Lipsius' life had been deeply marked by the rebellion and the ensuing civil war in the Netherlands. The *Politica* provided guidelines and practical advice on how to prevent the breakdown of princely power, with all the disastrous consequences Lipsius had witnessed. The *Politica's* engagement with his immediate social and political context remained largely veiled, although it did comment on the situation in the Netherlands through the treatment of the virtue of clemency.⁴⁶ Defined in Book 2 as 'a virtue which, on the basis of judgment, leans away from punishment and revenge, towards mildness', clemency helped a ruler 'secure the ends of kingship by securing love, safety and stability among his subjects.'⁴⁷ Attempts to achieve stability by 'arms and physical force' risked causing hatred, one of the main elements that could destroy a reign.⁴⁸ Without making the connection explicit, the three main factors Lipsius identified as provoking hatred among subjects clearly corresponded with elements of Philip II's policy that had alienated many of his subjects in the Low Countries during the early days of the Dutch Revolt. He had exhibited cruelty by executing the counts of Egmont and Horne, greed by imposing special taxations like the tenth penny, and rigidity through his austerity, severity and unforgiving attitude.⁴⁹ And by failing to take softening and mitigating measures, like paying a personal visit to the Netherlands, Philip had earned himself a most hostile reputation.

In his Italian translation, however, Cato brought Lipsius' implied criticisms to the surface. He wrote a substantial *annotazione* on how the role of the Duke of Alva during the Dutch Revolt illustrated 'the practice of this axiom of the cut trees.'⁵⁰ This referred to the aphorism in Book 2 Chapter 13, in which Lipsius stated, quoting Seneca: '*like certain trees sprout out when they are cut back, just so cruelty in a king increases the number of his enemies by eliminating them*' (original italics).⁵¹ It had been seen in the Netherlands, Cato argued, that after the Duke of Alva with his great severity had executed the counts of Egmont and Horne and many other nobles, and had imposed extraordinary taxes, the result proved opposite to the intention. Eventually,

while the Duke of Alva when he had entered Flanders found the lands peaceful and quiet, when he departed he left them tangled in the greatest wars and turbulences, with such a decrease of his reputation, which he had in so many of his other enterprises honorably acquired, and afterwards the enemies and the uprisings against the king increased so much that although he sent millions and millions of gold, and so many armies and the bravest officers, nonetheless he has never been able to completely stop those people.⁵²

Cato also used Alva's behaviour in the Netherlands to illustrate Lipsius' maxim about the problem of publicly punishing prominent and numerous subjects after a rebellion, which inevitably caused hatred. If it was inevitable, then it was most prudent to administer the punishment to all culprits at once, rather than one by one.⁵³ One could say, Cato argued, that Alva had not acted quite prudently in the Netherlands, and that 'after he had punished Egmont and Horne, and a few other of the most guilty in the rebellion, it seems that he had perhaps been more secure if he had then dropped the sword of vengeance and justice.' Alva's tardy and drawn-out disciplining had brought about a situation quite contrary to the one he had intended. Rather than breaking their resistance, he had driven the rebels to desperation and radicalization, and had given them time to plan. After all, the 'bloody spectacles of the death of noblemen were a very beastly and hard thing to see', and the regular executions 'completely deprived the subjects of any reasonable sentiment, seeing that they had no other way left to secure their well-being, if not pure desperation.'⁵⁴

With his emphasis on clemency rather than cruelty in the face of resistance, Lipsius may have been criticizing Chapter 17 of *The Prince*, in which Machiavelli recommended a quick and exemplary punishment of the leaders of a rebellion. A ruler should not worry about incurring a reputation for cruelty, for by ensuring order by punishing a few rather than permitting disorder to develop, he

was ultimately more merciful to the community at large.⁵⁵ Although Cato's example of Alva generally supported Lipsius' position, it also appeared to lean slightly towards Machiavelli's: instead of advocating clemency and condemning the executions altogether, Cato criticized the *manner* in which Alva had conducted them. There had been too many executions and they had been too public and too drawn out – but Cato did describe Egmont and Horne as having been felled by the sword of justice. Cato did not rule out severe means, as long as these were directed towards the preservation of peace and stability.

In Cato's choice of works to translate, then, a clear awareness transpires of the social and political upheavals of contemporary Europe, and a desire to be useful by making the works available to a wider Italian-speaking audience. Underlining the *Politica's* usefulness, Cato's annotations connected Lipsius' maxims to concrete examples from political practice. By bringing to the surface Lipsius' engagement with his immediate social and political context, Cato grounded the *Politica* more firmly in a context of contemporary politics. Yet he presented his own interpretations, and as the example of Alva indicates, these did not necessarily line up entirely with Lipsius' arguments.

Moving on from motivations, the question remains what characterized Cato as a translator. How faithfully did he render the original works, and where did he intervene? Although the *Politica* stands out among his oeuvre as the only translation to which Cato added commentaries, it was not the only work he enriched with elements of his own. To the first edition of his *Vicissitudine* Cato added a table of 'notable things' (*cose notabili*) or thematic summaries, absent from the original, designed to help reader navigate the vast quantities of information and examples. In the translation's second edition Cato also included a list of chapters and added short summaries at the opening of each of the twelve books.⁵⁶

Cato also intervened in the layout and typography of the originals. Conor Fahy has pointed out that Cato's translation of passages in Book II of Le Roy's *Vicissitude* on the technical aspects of printing reveal that he must have had some knowledge of the typographical process, and that he was scrupulous in rendering highly technical French terms into Italian.⁵⁷ In the case of the *Politica*, Cato's typographical interventions caused the work to lose its original appearance of a commonplace book. Although the sources of the many classical quotations were still identifiable through printed marginalia, the original italics to mark a direct quotation were only partly endorsed in the Italian translation. Most blank spaces between passages were removed, and each original chapter was now followed by an *annotazione* in the shape of a compact discourse. As Carmen Peraita has argued based on the Spanish translation of the *Politica* by Don Bernardino de Mendoza (1602), modification of typography could have a direct impact on the reading strategy which a translation invited, and on its orthodoxy. The fragmentary layout of a commonplace book invited active and inventive reading: audiences were encouraged to jump between chapters, to select and interpret useful passages, and to apply them to new contexts. The compact and unified discourse, on the other hand, directed audiences towards reading in a linear fashion, guided by the author's own interpretation. Limiting space for individual interpretation increased the orthodoxy of controversial works. Moreover, by reducing the visibility of the many (ancient) authorities Lipsius had recruited to express his arguments, the translation now appeared to represent the view of a single author instead of a host of classical authorities.⁵⁸ In Cato's *Politica*, the choice to shape his *annotazioni* as small discourses was made at a relatively late stage in the production. Whereas in the published translation all commentaries are grouped together at the end of each chapter, the manuscript splits them up, so that Cato's examples directly follow the specific line or quotation from the original. This not only enables us to precisely match the individual examples with the aphorisms on which they were supposed to comment, but it also indicates that layout and typography were matters of serious consideration in the process of creating the Italian *Politica*.

With regard to text itself, Cato generally acted as a precise and faithful translator. He even tended to retain the sequence of words and expressions, preserving the rhythm of the original text.⁵⁹ All content of Cato's translations was rendered in the vernacular. Whereas the original French *Vicissitude* included fragments of work by the Veronese poet Girolamo Fracastoro in their original Latin,

in Cato's translation they appeared in Italian, as did Lipsius' many quotations from classical authors.⁶⁰ Cato thus emphasized the continuity between the words of the author and those of the cited authorities, while the text overall appeared yet more integrated.

On one important point Cato did modify the original text of the works he translated, namely in order to ensure their orthodoxy. Cato and his publishers must have been especially risk averse after Cato's translation of Bodin's *Demonomanie* had been placed on the Index. It took several years of effective lobbying by the Manassi publishing house, who had been left with a large number of unsold copies, to have it removed in expurgated form.⁶¹ Improving orthodoxy was done to different degrees according to the nature of the original. The *Vicissitude* did not need much work, although Cato did remove the name of Antonio della Pagliara (or Aonio Paleario) from Le Roy's overview of noteworthy Italian humanists. A religious reformer, Paleario had been burned at the stake in 1570, and Cato was keen to avoid even the slightest association with heresy.⁶²

With regard to the text of the *Politica*, Cato and his editors made a sustained effort to make their Italian translation acceptable to the Roman Inquisition. While Cato was working on his translation, the original Latin underwent censoring: it had been placed on the Index shortly after its publication, but was removed in 1596 on the condition that it would be corrected. Largely thanks to the interventions of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine the corrections were relatively minor, and the expurgated *Politica* even retained some praise of Machiavelli.⁶³ In his translation, however, Cato took no risks. He opposed his Italian *Politica* more explicitly to the person and work of Machiavelli than Lipsius had done, and all positive references to Machiavelli were removed from the text. This included the mention of his 'fiery genius' in the address to the reader, and a sentence in Book 4 Chapter 13 that stated that 'the Italian reprobate must not be so categorically condemned'.⁶⁴ In fact, the translation presented Lipsius' moderate political theory as proceeding from 'divine inspiration', intended to salvage the 'true guidelines to rule as just princes' from the 'wicked doctrine' of Machiavelli.⁶⁵ The manuscript also shows traces of the reworking of controversial passages, especially those that touched on the question of fate and providence. The word '*fortuna*', for example, tended to be changed into '*divina volontà*' or '*providenza*'.⁶⁶ With this, the translation openly subscribed to a universe ruled by Providence rather than by the Machiavellian *fortuna*, which yielded to an attitude of boldness and initiative rather than Christian humility, and did not object to deceit.⁶⁷

4. Reason of state and the two faces of political prudence

Cato's strong anti-Machiavellian rhetoric in the *annotazioni* was characteristic of Catholic reason of state. Rather than signifying a straightforward rejection of Machiavelli altogether, the ostentatious distancing usually masked a relationship with Machiavelli's thought that was in fact highly ambiguous. Catholic or Counter-Reformation reason of state has often been characterized as a reactive 'anti-Machiavellism', but recently appreciation has grown for the creative intellectual effort of its authors. For example, Keith Howard has demonstrated how specific Machiavellian ideas were incorporated by writers in Counter-Reformation Spain, and adapted to their Catholic readership, arguing that much of the animosity towards Machiavelli was rhetorical pretence. Many authors silently adopted Machiavelli's general approach to politics, while ostentatiously criticizing particular aspects of his thought, especially his instrumental approach to virtue.⁶⁸

Cato's relationship with Machiavelli was definitely ambiguous. He was aware of the influence of Machiavelli's thought on Le Roy's *Vicissitude*, which he greatly admired. For example, Le Roy's conception of the civic role of religion was partly inspired by Machiavelli. Although he did not go so far as to treat religion as purely instrumental to civil government, Le Roy did present it as crucial in stabilizing and preserving a state, as it forms the basis for civic virtues and instils a fear which imposes loyalty.⁶⁹ Severini has pointed out that Le Roy demonstrated intimate knowledge of Machiavelli's *Discourses*, *The Art of War*, and to a lesser extent, *The Prince*.⁷⁰ Yet however much Cato may have agreed with Le Roy's tacit endorsements or appeared to lean towards Machiavelli himself, open association with Machiavelli would make any book unsellable. Ideologically, as

well as practically, it was vital that he should keep his own works within the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy.

It were Lipsius' observations on mixed prudence and the ruler's use of deceit in statecraft that brought his thought most dangerously close to Machiavelli. The debate on dissimulation and counterfeiting in politics had gained prominence in the wake of Machiavelli's suggestion that keeping faith was not always compatible with preserving power, and that a prince should be prepared to imitate the cunning of a fox and violate his promises when commanded by necessity. Within sixteenth-century Catholic political discourse, straightforward lying was universally condemned, but there was less agreement concerning dissimulation.⁷¹ Following Cicero, many authors agreed that good dissimulation was essential in preserving the state and the common good, yet dissimulation could only be truly beneficial if it was appropriate in the times and circumstances. To ensure this, a ruler needed to be guided by prudence.⁷² In the *Politica*, Lipsius appeared more tolerant of deceit than most of his contemporaries. He divided political deceit into three categories, of which dissimulation fell into the first category of 'light' deceit, containing 'not more than a little drop of malice', which he straightforwardly recommended.⁷³ The second category of 'middle' deceit or corruption could be tolerated, and only the third category of 'grave' deceit, or injustice and breach of faith, should be condemned. However, Lipsius acknowledged that in exceptional cases and when required by necessity, even the best princes needed to act contrary to the laws of justice in order to preserve their position. This provided readers with considerable room for interpretation, for he neglected to outline what would be considered an exceptional case, nor did he provide any concrete examples.⁷⁴

In the context of Catholic reason of state, dissimulation needed to be carefully cleansed of associations with Machiavelli. In order to make their own ideas less suspicious, authors greatly exaggerated his statements about dissimulation to the point of turning them into caricatures. The most orthodox authors even classed Lipsius' ideas about 'mixed prudence' as Machiavellism. In his *Gobernador christiano* (1612), the Spanish Jesuit Juan Márquez complained that nowadays men were celebrated for their wisdom who, 'judging it impossible to reach the just goals aimed at by rulers without the use of simulations, fictions, and duplicities, have discovered a 'mixed prudence' lightly sprinkled (as they put it) with simulation, cunning and deceit.'⁷⁵ This doctrine was but a ruse, under the cover of piety, to make outright lying an acceptable practice. Usually, however, authors targeted not Lipsius but Machiavelli and his alleged followers.⁷⁶ Many authors, including Botero, emphasized that feigning virtues for pragmatic ends, especially piety, counted as the most wicked kind of deception.⁷⁷ It should be noted that in many cases, the rigid moral stance of these authors was undermined by historical examples that sent ambiguous and confusing messages.⁷⁸ Moreover, arguments in favour of honesty were not necessarily based on the intrinsic value of truthfulness in matters of religion: authors instead pointed at the counterproductive nature of merely pretending to be pious, for rulers who practiced this type of deceit would inevitably suffer divine retribution.⁷⁹

Although Cato in his Italian *Politica* tended to adapt the original whenever it risked conflicting with orthodoxy, he did not distance himself from Lipsius on the matter of deceit. Instead, he used the annotations as a space to reflect on prudence and the legitimacy of deceit in relation to concrete examples from ancient and modern history – and thus to limit the room for individual interpretation that Lipsius' ambiguity had created. Cato made special use of the example of two rulers, namely the Roman emperor Tiberius and the late medieval French king Louis XI (r. 1461–83). Tiberius' reputation for political acumen was well established in Cato's day, while Louis XI had gained prominence in the wake of the publication of Philippe de Commines' *Mémoires* (1524), which Cato referred to several times.⁸⁰ He would have been able to use one of the many French editions or the Italian translation, which appeared around the time he was translating the *Politica*.⁸¹ Both Louis XI and Tiberius were reputed for their political prudence, but in Cato's commentaries, they stood for its two different aspects. Whereas Louis XI personified (calculated) virtue and foresight, Tiberius was the face of ruthless deceit.

Cato used the example of Louis XI to show how a ruler could legitimately and effectively apply dissimulation. ‘King Louis XI always ruled with dissimulation and cunning’, and this was extremely expedient, for it was paired with wisdom, foresight and a strict sense of justice.⁸² For example, Louis XI had known how to ostensibly enter into an alliance with one party, while secretly favouring another.⁸³ Yet in Cato’s portrayal, Louis’ cunning was always accompanied by a strong sense of legitimate authority. Thus Cato described how Louis, after one of his agents had been assaulted while carrying out royal orders, appeared in person at the court with his right in a sling around his neck. When asked whether he had been hurt, Louis replied that he had, ‘in his justice, which was the right arm of his rule.’ The transgressor suffered severe and exemplary punishment.⁸⁴

While Louis XI in Cato’s examples employed dissimulation to further the cause of justice, Tiberius used it to cover up his personal and political flaws. As Cato explained, Tiberius gradually increased his power at the expense of the Senate and the people while dissimulating his rigour and cruelty.⁸⁵ But above all, Tiberius was the prime example of a ruler whose words and actions did not always correspond. When advised to frequently rotate important military and civil offices, Tiberius openly declared that he agreed, but Cato observed that ‘these words were spoken by Tiberius out of dissimulation’ and that in reality he tended to prolong appointments until death.⁸⁶ In the chapter on mixed prudence, Lipsius himself briefly referred to Tiberius in connection to dissimulation. Cato expanded on this:

Tiberius used to say ‘*nescit regnare qui nescit desimulare*’: he who does not know how to dissimulate, does not know how to rule. And indeed Tiberius himself was the prince of the greatest dissimulations that have ever been, in such a way that neither Louis XI nor Ferdinand King of Castile, nor many other princes who were very good dissimulators, could hardly have been disciples of him, who was the most excellent master of every manner of dissimulation.⁸⁷

Cato explicitly connected the phrase ‘*Qui nescit dissimulare*’ to ‘*ragion di stato*’ or reason of state, a term never used by Lipsius himself.⁸⁸ ‘*Qui nescit ...*’ was in fact one of the most frequently used tenets in reason-of-state literature in several European vernaculars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Authors usually ascribed it not to Tiberius, however, but to Louis XI. Initially this was meant to demonstrate his reprehensible view of politics, but around the turn of the century ‘*qui nescit ...*’ started to be hailed as the apex of political wisdom.⁸⁹ Louis was turned from a villain into exemplary ruler, full of reputed pragmatism and political skill. The French author Gabriel Naudé, for instance, called him ‘the wisest and most sensible of kings’ in his *Considérations politiques sur les coups d’estat* (1639), arguing that subterfuge and dissimulation were permissible in certain circumstances. Acknowledging his intellectual debt to Lipsius, Naudé distinguished between various types of prudence: ‘ordinary’ prudence conformed to the accepted tenets of Christian morality, while the ‘extraordinary’ kind included actions that were only legitimate in exceptional circumstances.⁹⁰ Giovanni Botero, Traiano Boccalini and Girolamo Frachetta all based part of their writings on the prudent reign of Louis XI and also in Spanish reason-of-state writing, ‘*qui nescit ...*’ recurs in nearly every discussion of deceit.⁹¹ Typically, Spanish authors would make an ostentatious effort to distance the prudent dissimulation associated with the aphorism from Machiavelian deceit.⁹²

Cato did not entirely condemn Tiberius and his reason of state, but he made it clear that they bordered on the unorthodox. The choice to explicitly connect reason of state with a classical example was in this regard significant. Throughout his annotations, Cato continuously drew attention to the distinction between ancient and modern examples with remarks such as ‘leaving aside the more ancient examples ...’ or ‘to also add examples from times less remote.’⁹³ So when he came to openly naming reason of state, Cato himself explained that examples of its practice could perhaps be found somewhere in the modern world, but he would rather not discuss them explicitly. For with these slippery affairs, it is best ‘not to leave ancient times.’⁹⁴

5. Conclusion

Perhaps much of the *Politica's* force lay in the very enigmatic nature of the work, which enabled a wide variety of readers to apply its observations to specific contexts. By not tying the political observations down to concrete examples, the *Politica* made them universally relevant and applicable – even if this active and inventive reading might lead audiences to arrive at some unorthodox notions. Ercole Cato's answer was to eliminate this risk by transforming the original, adapting text and layout and using his own examples to clearly mark the boundaries between the morally acceptable and unacceptable. With his creative use of examples, Cato presented Lipsius' political prudence as one that rejected political calculation without virtue, and outlined how the *Politica's* abstract statements and aphorisms related to the concrete politics of sixteenth-century Europe. This way, Cato not only enriched his beloved vernacular with Lipsius' *Politica*: he also made his own intervention in the contemporary debate on Catholic reason of state.

The Italian *Politica* was the result of Cato acting in a number of overlapping roles. As a secretary and agent, he was aware of political developments on the Italian peninsula and beyond; as a humanist, he was part of a movement that was advancing standards in history and scholarship; and as a translator of the *Politica*, he took on the role of mediator in a chain of readership. What Cato did in his book was similar to the original project of Lipsius, namely exploring the boundaries between the useful and the moral in politics. Yet as a man of practice, Cato also illustrates how ordinary individuals might have thought about applying Lipsius' political theory to concrete politics. Cato's case speaks to the recent turn in modern intellectual history that studies the intersection between thought and action. Concrete efforts are now being made to broaden the study of political discourse to include a variety of non-canonical thinkers and sources, such as the writings and actions of statesmen, discourses of counsel, and the agents that situated the emergence and dissemination of ideas within transnational networks of empire, commerce or travel.⁹⁵ Within this movement there is a natural place for translators. Approaching their works as evidence of individual reading opens up a wealth of non-canonical source material for studying interpretations of texts and ideas. But as the case of Cato demonstrates, the work of translators can also present original contributions to early modern languages of political thought.

Notes

1. Robert Bireley, 'Introduction', in Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), xvi; Id., *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 45; Jan Waszink, 'Introduction', in Justus Lipsius, *Politica: Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction*, trans. and ed. Jan Waszink (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004), 90.
2. Although Lipsius never explicitly used the term reason of state, both his contemporaries and modern historians have considered it the central concern of the *Politica*. See Waszink, 'Introduction', 3; Carmen Peraita, 'Typographical Translations: Spanish Refashioning of Lipsius's *Politicorum Libri Sex*', *Renaissance Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (2011): 2011, 1110.
3. Waszink, 'Introduction', 98–102; Peter Stacey, *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), part V; Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1651* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 57–58; Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 18, 27–28, 36; Martin van Gelderen, 'The Machiavellian Moment and the Dutch Revolt: The Rise of Neostoicism and Dutch Republicanism', in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, eds. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 209, 210. Another genre to which Lipsius' oeuvre constituted a crucial contribution was Tacitism. See Jan Waszink, 'Lipsius and Grotius: Tacitism', *History of European Ideas* 39, no. 2 (2013), 151–68.
4. Maria Elena Severini, *De la vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers. La traduzione italiana di Ercole Cato* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014), 69–140. On Bodin in Italy: Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Michaela Valente, *Bodin in Italia: la Démonomanie des sorciers e le vicende della sua traduzione* (Florence: Centro editoriale toscano, 1999). While Cato's translation of the *Politica* remains largely neglected, it is treated in Alberto Clerici, 'Sulla fortuna dei *Politicorum libri sex* di Giusto

- Lipsio in Italia: la traduzione di Alessandro Tassoni', in *Scritti in ricordo di Armando Saitta* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2002), 139–54.
5. Jane Tylus and Karen Newman, introduction to *Early Modern Cultures of Translation* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 2–3; Derval Conroy, 'Appropriations of a Political Machine: Translations of Pierre Le Moyné's *Gallerie des femmes fortes* (1647)', *Renaissance Studies* 34 (2020): 447–64; Harald Braun, 'Making the Canon? The Early Reception of the *République* in Castilian Political Thought', in *Reception of Bodin*, ed. Howell Lloyd (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 257–92; Peraita, 'Typographical Translations', 1106–47; Stefanie Stockhorst, introduction to *Cultural Transfer Through Translation: the Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe By Means of Translation* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 7–26; Peter Burke, 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe', in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Peter Burke and Ronald Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7–38. As a process, translating was part of a complex web of exchange and encounter of foreign-language objects, which involved translation, annotation, framing, typesetting, selling, censoring, and banning; José María Pérez Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee, introduction to *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2.
 6. Geoffrey Baldwin, 'The Translation of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe', in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Peter Burke and Ronald Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 101–2.
 7. Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past & Present* 129 (1990): 30–78; Lisa Jardine, "'Studied for Action" Revisited", in *For the Sake of Learning* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 997–1017; Lisa Jardine and William Sherman, 'Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in late Elizabethan England', in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern England*, eds. A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 102–24. See also Daniel Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
 8. Saúl Martínez Bermejo, *Translating Tacitus: The Reception of Tacitus's Works in the Vernacular Languages of Europe, 16th-17th Centuries* (Pisa: PLUS-Pisa University Press, 2010), 5, 114.
 9. Ercole Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi del Cav. Hercole Cato ferrarese sopra i sei libri della Politica di Giusto Lipsi', ca1601, Mss Vat.lat. 9918 (fols 1–105), Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.
 10. Amid the vast literature on reason of state, see most importantly Friedrich Ernst Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and Its Place in Modern History*, trans. Werner Stark (London: Routledge, 1984); William Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973); Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Peter Burke, 'Tacitism, Scepticism, and Reason of State', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. James Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 479–98; Harro Höpfl, 'Orthodoxy and Reason of State', *History of Political Thought* 2 (2002): 211–37 and 'Thomas Fitzherbert's Reason of State', *History of European Ideas* 37, no. 2 (2011): 94–101. Conal Condren, 'Reason of State and Sovereignty in Early Modern England: a Question of Ideology?', *Parergon* 28, no. 2 (2011): 5–27; Ioannis Evrigenis and Mark Somos, 'Wrestling with Machiavelli', *History of European Ideas* 37, no. 2 (2011): 85–93.
 11. Tiziano Ascari, 'Cato, Ercole', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 22 (1972), www.treccani.it, accessed 12 May 2021. Although the identity of Ercole Cato's wife is unknown, there is a record of a number of sons.
 12. Ludovico was a fiscal prosecutor and lecturer in civil law at the University of Ferrara, who spent most of his life in the service of Duke Alfonso I d'Este. In the mid-1520s, he spent two years in Spain as Alfonso's special ambassador at the court of Charles V. Tiziano Ascari, 'Cato, Ludovico', *Dizionario Biografico*, vol. 22, www.treccani.it, accessed 25 November 2015. Cato's older brother Renato Cato (1519-1608) succeeded his father as prosecutor and became secretary and counsellor to Duke Alfonso II d'Este. Tiziano Ascari, 'Cato, Renato', *Dizionario Biografico*, vol. 22, www.treccani.it, accessed 25 November 2020.
 13. Ercole Cato, *Oratione fatta dal cavaliere Hercole Cato nelle essequie dell'illustriss. & reverendiss. sig. D. Hippolito d'Este card. di Ferrara, celebrate nella città di Tivoli* (Ferrara: Vittorio Baldini, 1587).
 14. Ascari, 'Cato, Ercole'. For Cato's complaints, see e.g. Cato to Girolamo Galeazzi, 6 January 1595, Cancelleria Ducale 43, Archivio Segreto Estense (hereafter SE), Archivio di Stato di Modena (hereafter ASMo). Two letters from Cato to Giovanni Battista Laderchi, 17 May 1598 and 26 December 1598 (2), Materie 14, SE, ASMo.
 15. Cato to Laderchi, 2 July 1587, Cancelleria Ducale 29a, SE, ASMo. For the administrative machinery of the Este court, see Anthony Colantuono, 'Estense Patronage and the Construction of the Ferrarese Renaissance, c. 1395–1598', in *The Court Cities of Northern Italy* ed. Charles Rosenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 196–243; Werner Gundersheimer, *Ferrara: The Style of Renaissance Despotism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), esp. 283–296.
 16. Grazia Biondi, 'Laderchi, Giovanni Battista', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 63 (2004), www.treccani.it, accessed 25 November 2020.
 17. Two letters from Cato to Laderchi, both 1 June 1592, Cancelleria Ducale 29a, SE, ASMo. For Cato sharing his personal cares, see also letters to Laderchi from 22 October 1587 and 6 June 1594.

18. See letters from Cato to Laderchi from 15 May 1587 (Florence), 27 November 1591 (Rome), Cancelleria Ducale 29a, SE, ASMo; and Cato to Laderchi, 9 June 1593 (Parma), Cancelleria Ducale 3, SE, ASMo. See also two letters from Cato to Montecatini, Comacchio, 5 and 6 December, Cancelleria Ducale 29a, SE, ASMo.
19. The Republic's *Signoria* refused to support Cesare and the Spanish ambassador Íñigo de Mendoza would not receive the Cato's, claiming to be ill in bed. Michael Levin, *Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 39.
20. Karen Meyer-Roux, 'The Entry of Clement VIII into Ferrara: Donato Rascicotti's Triumph', *Getty Research Journal* 3 (2011): 176. Cesare, left with the position of Duke of Modena and Reggio, moved his court to Modena.
21. Cato to Cesare d'Este, 26 December 1598 (1); Cato to Alessandro d'Este, 26 December 1598 (3); Cato to Cesare d'Este, 29 January 1603 (1), Materie 14, SE, ASMo.
22. Cato to Cesare d'Este, 29 January 1603 (1), Materie 14, SE, ASMo; Cato to Laderchi, 29 January 1603 (2), Materie 14, SE, ASMo.
23. Besides his works discussed here, he also wrote some poetry: Ercole Cato, *Del Cavalier Hercole Cato sopra il bello, & amenissimo luogo del Mag. Sig. Giulio Benalio* (Ferrara: V. Baldini, 1584).
24. The review was written in the form of a dialogue between the author and his interlocutor Ergasto, and mainly argued that in his praise of Rovigo, Nicolio downgraded the historical value of Cato's home town Lendinara. Zago di Santa Rentua, pseud., *Apologia (...) sopra l'Historia di A. Nicolio da Rovigo dell'origine ed antichità di quello* (Bologna: Giovanni Rossi, 1584). On the pseudonym, see Jacopo Morelli, *Catalogo di storie generali a particolari d'Italia* (Venice: P. Savioni, 1782), 158.
25. Zago di Santa Rentua (pseud.), *Apologia*, 27. As an illustration, he pointed out that artists who painted the ancient king Antigonus the One-Eyed never depicted him full frontal out of reluctance to unnecessarily distort the esthetics. Rather, they chose his profile on the good side, thus disguising the irregularity. See Vincenzo Requeno, *Saggi sul ristabilimento dell'antica arte de' greci e romani pittori* (Parma: Stamperia reale, 1787), 105.
26. Ms 249, Biblioteca Ariostea Ferrara (hereafter BAF) (Andrea Nicolio's *Historia del sig. Andrea Nicolio dell'origine et antichità di Rovigo* (Verona: Sebastiano dalle Donne, 1582) with manuscript annotations by Ercole Cato), 31; see also 65.
27. Ms 249, BAF, 2; see also 26 and 30.
28. Ms 249, BAF, 16.
29. Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 68, 83, 93–94; Woolf, *Reading History*, 87–92; Katrina Olds, *Forging the Past: Invented Histories in Counter-Reformation Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 15–16.
30. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, 252–55. For Botero, see Harald Braun, 'Knowledge and Counsel in Giovanni Botero's *Ragion di Stato*', *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4 (2017): 270–89. Historical examples were especially key to Machiavelli's method: Gábor Almási, 'Machiavelli's Scientific Method: A Common Understanding of his Novelty in the Sixteenth Century', *History of European Ideas* 44, no. 8 (2018): 1019–45.
31. George Nadel, 'Philosophy of History before Historicism', *History and Theory* 3, no. 3 (1964): 291–315. Grafton, *What Was History?*, 26, 30.
32. Justus Lipsius, *Della politica ovvero del governo di stato libri sei di Giusto Lipsio (...) Tradotto di Latino in volgare, & ampliati con dottissime annotazioni dal sig. cavalier Hercole Cati gentiluomo Ferrarese*, ed. and trans. Ercole Cato (Venice: Angelo Righettini, 1618) (hereafter Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*), to the reader.
33. Charles Estienne, *L'agricoltura et casa di villa de Carlo Stefano, nuovamente tradatto dal cavaliere Hercole Cato*, trans. Ercole Cato (Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1581). Subsequent editions include Turin: eredi di Niccolò Bevilacqua, 1590; Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1591; Venice: s.l., 1606; Venice: Giovanni Antonio Giuliani, 1623; Venice: Marco Ginammi, 1648; Venice: s.l., 1677. See Yasmin Haskell, *Loyola's Bees: Ideology and Industry in Jesuit Latin Didactic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 38. Cato based his translation on the French translation by Estienne's son-in-law Jean Liébault, which went through several editions before 1582.
34. Jean Bodin, *Demonomania degli Stregoni, cioè furori, et malie de' demoni, col mezo de gli huomini ... di Gio. Bodino francese*, trans. Ercole Cato (Venice: Aldo Manuzio, 1587).
35. Louis Le Roy, *La Vicissitudine, ò, mutabile varietà delle cose, nell'universo*, trans. Ercole Cato (Venice: for Nicolò Manassi by Aldo Manuzio, 1585). It was re-issued in 1592 by the same publishing house. Le Roy was himself a famous translator of Aristotle and other classical works. For a recent discussion on his ideas of an Aristotelian 'science of politics', see Sarah Mortimer, *Reformation, Resistance, and Reason of State (1517-1625)* (Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press, 2021), 224–27.
36. Severini, *De la vicissitude*, 69–140. For the *Vicissitude*, see also Werner Gundersheimer, *The Life and Works of Louis Le Roy* (Geneva: Droz, 1966), esp. part IV.
37. When it came out in 1618 it was the second Italian translation to appear in print, but the first to include extensive commentaries. The first was Justus Lipsius, *Della politica, ovvero dottrina civile di Giusto Lipsio libri VI*, trans. Antonio Numai (Rome: Giovanni Martinelli, 1604). Another manuscript translation predates the first published translation. This was the one produced by Alessandro Tassoni and it was widely disseminated

- within the network of his master, Cardinal Ascanio Colonna, who was a friend and correspondent of Lipsius. Clerici, 'Sulla fortuna', 141. Finally in 1677, a fourth translation was made by Sisto Pietralata (Rome: Dragon-delli, 1677).
38. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, dedication. Lodovico dedicated the book to Pietro Aldobrandini, ruler of Ferrara and his father's former patron.
 39. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, to the reader.
 40. Severini, De la vicissitude, 116–17.
 41. Le Roy, *La Vicissitudine*, to the reader.
 42. Severini, De la vicissitude, 50–53. Cato and Le Roy voiced a position that was commonly held in late humanism, praising translation into the modern vernaculars as an important pedagogical tool and an act to ennoble vernacular culture.
 43. Le Roy, *La Vicissitudine*, to the reader; Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, to the reader.
 44. Severini, De la vicissitude, 12–13, 16–17. Severini points out that Le Roy's Italian readers such as Vico and Bruno would take this further, and present conflict and contingency as motors of human history, crucial for bringing about *renovatio* and progress.
 45. Severini, De la vicissitude, 85–97.
 46. In other places in his oeuvre, the virtue of clemency alternatively served as a glorification of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella and an unequivocal critique of the rule of the Duke of Alva. See Violet Soen, 'The Clemencia Lipsiana: Political Analysis, Autobiography and Panegyric', in *(Un)Masking the Realities of Power. Justus Lipsius and the Dynamics of Political Writing in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Erik de Bom (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 207–31.
 47. Lipsius, *Politica*, 325 and 327; 707–9.
 48. Lipsius, *Politica*, 349.
 49. Lipsius, *Politica*, 463 and 465–95; 329.
 50. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 43.
 51. Lipsius, *Politica*, 329.
 52. Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fols. 14v–15r. The manuscript passage continued that 'these matters are still in great upheaval', but in the published version this was replaced with more elaborate and updated information: 'today under the rule of Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella of Austria his wife, there is more distress and warfare than ever.' Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 43. This addition must have been made at a later date, but previous to the final manuscript version which eventually went to print, for when the edition appeared, the Twelve Years' Truce (1609–21) had temporarily brought the fighting in the Netherlands to a halt.
 53. Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 58r.
 54. In Book 6, Lipsius came back to this point on how in the early stage, it was crucial not to provoke subjects but to guide them gently back to obedience. Lipsius quoted Tacitus, who wrote that 'often *the beginnings of rebellion have been stopped by moderate measures*.' When it came to punishing rebels, the ruler had to be exceptionally cautious. Punishment should always be proportional to the crime committed, and limited, and directed only against the most prominent wrongdoers. Lipsius, *Politica*, 685 and 687.
 55. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 58.
 56. Severini, De la vicissitude, 115–16. Similarly, in the preliminary work of the *Politica* Cato included a list of chapters, as well as a table of 'materie, sopra le quali se fatto discorso' and another table with the names of persons mentioned in his annotations.
 57. Conor Fahy, 'Descrizioni cinquecentesche della fabbricazione dei caratteri e del processo tipografico', *La Bibliofilia* 88, no. 1 (1986): 68–69; Severini, De la vicissitude, 49–50.
 58. Peraita, 'Typographical Translations', 1106–47. See also Justus Lipsius, *Los seys libros de las politicas o doctrina civil de J.L., que sirven para el gobierno del reyno o principado*, trans. Bernardino de Mendoza (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1604). Lipsius acknowledged in the original *Politica* that 'everything is mine, and nothing' in his book, 'for although the selection and the arrangement are mine, the words and phrases I have gathered from various places in the ancient writers.' Lipsius, *Politica*, preliminary matter (quote) and 231–3.
 59. Severini, De la vicissitude, 115.
 60. Severini, De la vicissitude, 74.
 61. Nuovo, *The Book Trade*, 138, 379. See also Valente, *Bodin in Italia*, passim.
 62. Severini, De la vicissitude, 81–82.
 63. Waszink, 'Introduction', 120–24; Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, 19–20. The first and only Latin edition published in Italy was the expurgated version: Justus Lipsius, *Justi Lipsii Politicorum, sive Civilis doctrinae libri sex* (Verona: Societatis Aspirantium, 1601).
 64. Lipsius, *Politica*, 231 (preliminary matter) and 511 (4.13). See also Clerici, 'Sulla Fortuna', 148. Also the chapters in Book 4 on religious liberty are entirely removed from the translation, and replaced by a small note: 'Il 3o e il 4o capitoli di questo quarto libro sono stati pretermessi apostata per degni riguardi'. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 90.

65. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, to the reader.
66. For example: Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 20r ('fu dalla fortuna fatto') versus the corresponding passage in Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 58 (fu diventato). See also 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 3r ('fatale dispositione', corrected into 'dispositione') versus Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 6 ('providenza').
67. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, eds. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 85.
68. Keith Howard, *The Reception of Machiavelli in Early Modern Spain* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2014), passim, but see 4–5, 11, 83, 97–8, 83. See also Ioannis Evrigenis and Mark Somos, 'Wrestling with Machiavelli', *History of European Ideas* 37, no. 2 (2011): 85–93.
69. Severini, De la vicissitude, 90, 94–96.
70. Severini, De la vicissitude, 93, 96–97.
71. The most common contemporary understanding, based on Aquinas, was that 'dissimulation' stood for claiming that something did not exist which in fact did, while 'simulation' was pretending that something existed which in fact did not. Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 3, 6, 11–12; Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c. 1540–1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 155–163; Harald Braun, *Juan de Mariana and Early Modern Spanish Political Thought* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 119–120, 132; Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince*, 126. A modern source that many Catholic authors drew on in their discussions of dissimulation was the work of the jurist Martín de Azpilcueta or Doctor Navarrus (1492–1586), who dealt at length with the issue in the treatise on the good and bad art of dissimulation *Commentarius in cap. humanae aures, XXII que V. de veritate responsi, partim verbo expresso, partim mente concepti, et de arte bona et mala simulandi* (Rome: Bartolomeo Bonfadino 1584). For dissimulation in various early modern contexts, see Miriam Eliav-Feldon, introduction to *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 2–4; Jon Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009).
72. Stefania Tutino, *Uncertainty in Post-Reformation Catholicism: A History of Probabilism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 14–16; See also Robert Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits: The Influence of the Liberal Arts on the Adoption of Moral Probabilism* (Aldershot, VT: Ashgate, 2008).
73. Lipsius, *Politica*, 513.
74. It could be right for a prince to depart slightly from moral laws, 'but only in order to preserve his position, never to extend it.' Lipsius, *Politica*, 531. For a detailed analysis of the use of necessity to temporarily suspend moral law in Spanish reason of state, see Lisa Kattenberg, *The Power of Necessity: Reason of State in the Spanish Monarchy, c. 1590–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
75. José Fernández-Santamaria, *Reason of State and Statecraft in Spanish Political Thought, 1595–1640* (Lanham, M.D. etc.: University Press of America, 1983), 95.
76. Pedro Barbosa Homem, *Discursos de la iuridica y verdadera razón de estado, formados sobre la vida, y acciones del Rey don Iuan el II* (Coimbra: Nicolao Carvalho, 1629), f. 263v–264.
77. Giovanni Botero, *Razon destado, con tres libros de la grandeza de las ciudades, traduzido de Italiano en Castellano por A. de Herrera*, trans. Antonio de Herrera (Burgos: Sebastian de Cañas, 1603), f. 7.
78. Braun, *Juan de Mariana*, 123–25.
79. Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *Tratado de la religion y virtudes que deve tener el principe christiano, para govarnar y conservar sus estados* (Madrid: P. Madrigal, 1595), 287. See also Kattenberg, *The Power of Necessity*, Ch. 1.
80. Philippe de Comynes, *Cronique & hystoire: contenant les choses advenues durant le regne du Roy Loys XIe* (Paris: Galliot du Pre, 1524).
81. Cato referred to Comynes by his title, Lord of Argentone: 'Scrive l'Argentone che il Rè Luigi ...'. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 65; see also 80. Philippe de Comynes, *Delle memorie di Filippo di Comines cavaliero & signore d'Argentone intorno alle principali attioni di Ludovico Undicesimo*, trans. Lorenzo Conti (Genoa: Heredi di G. Bartoli, 1594).
82. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 176; Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 63v.
83. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 128; Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 47r.
84. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 119; Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 39v.
85. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 118.
86. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 123; Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 43r.
87. Cato, 'Discorsi, annotationi et esempi', fol. 68r.
88. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 121.
89. Adrianna Bakos, '“Qui Nescit Dissimulare, Nescit Regnare”: Louis XI and Raison d'État During the Reign of Louis XIII', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52, no. 3 (1991): 400–1; Thomas Maissen, 'Le 'Comynisme Italien': Louis XI, héros de la Contre-Reforme', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 58, no. 2 (1996): 313–49. For the assimilation of the maxim in English discourses on counsel, see Joanne Paul, *Counsel and Command in Early Modern English Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 98–100.

90. Gabriel Naudé, *Considerations politiques sur les coups d'Etat*. Par G. N. P. (Rome: s.n., 1639); Bakos, ‘“Qui Nescit Dissimulare”’, 402–3.
91. Botero, *Razon destado*, fols. 75r, 35r.
92. For example Pedro Barbosa Homem, *Discursos de la iuridica y verdadera razón de estado, formados sobre la vida, y acciones del Rey don Iuan el II* (Coimbra: Nicolao Carvallo, 1629), fol. 271v; Ribadeneyra, *Tratado*, 283; Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea de un principe politico-christiano, representado en cien empresas* (1640; Amsterdam: Janssonius, 1659), 372–3. See also Howard, *The Reception of Machiavelli*, passim.
93. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 20 and 29–30.
94. Lipsius and Cato, *Della politica*, 165.
95. See David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13, 31; Noah Millstone, ‘Seeing like a Statesman in Early Stuart England’, *Past and Present* 223, no. 1 (2014): 77–127 and his *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Paul, *Counsel and Command*, 5. See also, for example, Max Skjölberg, *The Persistence of Party: Ideas of Harmonious Discord in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Acknowledgements

This research first started as part of a PhD project funded by the Amsterdam School of Historical Studies, and I am grateful to my supervisors Wyger Velema and Maartje van Gelder for their guidance and feedback. The work has been generously supported by a research fellowship at the Royal Dutch Institute in Rome. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments. All translations, unless otherwise specified, are mine.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge; Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut in Rome; and the University of Amsterdam.

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