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The Ideal Leader's Rise above Character in the Thought of Machiavelli and Maimonides

By *Shalom Sadik**

Abstract

One of the most original points of the political thought of Machiavelli (1469-1527) is, according to many scholars, the lack of character of the ideal leader. Major philosophers before Machiavelli believed that one of the most important qualities for the ideal leader to have is a character that consistently pushes him to do good and to refrain from evil. In contrast to this opinion, Machiavelli argued that the ideal leader must be able to overcome regular moral standards and to act in each situation according to the specific circumstances of the particular situation. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that Maimonides (1138-1204) held the same position as Machiavelli regarding the ideal leader's character.

In the first two parts of this article I summarize the positions of these two philosophers on the ideal leader's character. In the third part I emphasize the different opinions of the two philosophers on the goals of political life on the one hand, and their similar understanding of the political world on the other hand. In the final part of the article I deal with the question of a possible influence of Maimonides on Machiavelli.

Zu Bemerkenswertesten in Machiavellis (1469-1527) politischem Denken gehört, nach Meinung vieler Forscher, das Fehlen eines Charakters des idealen Herrschers. Philosophen vor ihm glaubten, dass eine der wichtigsten Eigenschaften, über die ein idealer Herrscher zu verfügen hat, ein Charakter ist, der ihn unablässig zwingt, das Gute zu tun und vom Bösen abzulassen. Im Gegensatz dazu vertritt Machiavelli die Ansicht, dass der ideale Herrscher fähig sein muss, übliche moralische Standards zu überwinden und in jeder Situation den spezifischen Bedingungen einer jeden Situation entsprechend zu handeln. Anliegen dieses Aufsatzes ist es zu zeigen, dass Maimonides (1138-1204) hinsichtlich des Charakters des idealen Herrschers dieselbe Position vertreten hat wie Machiavelli.

In den ersten zwei Abschnitten dieses Aufsatzes resümiere ich die Ansichten der beiden Philosophen zum Thema Charakter des idealen Herrschers. Im dritten Teil möchte ich die Unterschiede in den Meinungen der beiden Philosophen hinsichtlich der Zwecke politischen Lebens einerseits und die Ähnlichkeit ihrer Auffassungen von der politischen Welt andererseits aufzeigen. Im Schlussabschnitt behandele ich die Frage eines möglichen Einflusses von Maimonides auf Machiavelli.

One of the most original points of the political thought of Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469-1527) is, according to many scholars, the

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lack of character[1] of the ideal leader.[2] Major philosophers before Machiavelli believed that one of the most important qualities for the ideal leader to have is a character that consistently pushes him to do good and to refrain from evil.[3] In contrast to this opinion, Machiavelli argued that the ideal leader must be able to overcome regular moral standards and to act in each situation according to the specific circumstances of the particular situation. In his opinion, only a person who is able to rise above all sense of character[4] and who does not truly have a fixed character is capable of adjusting his actions to the specific circumstances, thereby enabling him-

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1 I chose the word "character", which is not utilized by either philosopher, as not to associate the word with a different meaning already used by them. By the word "character" I mean the combination of nature, habit, and quality that leads one to act in a certain way and not in another possible way. The purpose of using a word that neither one of these philosophers used it is to create a tenable basis for comparison between the different Italian terms employed by Machiavelli and the Judeo-Arabic terms of Maimonides.
We will see that Machiavelli does not really describe the psychological process that permits the ideal leader to act in a good or bad way. He just proves that the leader has to be capable of acting in a good or bad way. Maimonides uses the term היאת נפסאניה aptitude of the soul to describe the psychological tendency of man. We will see that the ideal leader has to be without this kind of tendency (similar to God), and be capable of acting both I a bad and good way, according to society's needs.

2 On this subject see among others: L. STRAUSS, *Thought on Machiavelli*, Glencoe 1958, pp. 28-29, 162-164, 231-299; S. DE GRAZIA, *Machiavelli in Hell*, Oxford 1989, pp. 71-87, 232-240, 258-288, 313-317, H. C. MANSFIELD, *Machiavelli's Virtue*, Chicago 1996, pp. 36-46; B. FONTANA, 'Love of Country and Love of God: The Political Uses of Religion in Machiavelli', in: *Journal of History of Ideas* 60 (1999), pp. 639-658, especially pp. 648-650. J. M. PARENT, 'Machiavelli's Missing Romulus and the Murderous Intent of *The Prince*', in: *History of Political Thought* 26 (2005), pp. 625-645. These authors argue that Machiavelli recommended to Lorenzo de Medici to kill his uncle (Pope Leo X) and the cardinals; G. GIORINI, ' The Place of the Tyrant in Machiavelli's Political Thought and the Literary Genre of The Prince', in: *History of Political Thought* 29 (2008), pp. 231-256 (especially pp. 231-232 and pp. 241-244).

3 For example, PLATO in books 2-5 of *The Republic* explains the instruction received by the guards and the philosophers that have to command the city. An important part of this education is to instill traits like justice, courage ...; ARISTOTLE *Politics* I, 3; AL-FARABI, *Opinions of people of the perfect state*, Chapter 28; THOMAS AQUINAS *De Regno ad Regem Cypri,* Chapter 4.

4 In the article we will see that this total lack of character is a goal that no human can really completely achieve.

self to reach his political goals.[5] The aim of this article is to demonstrate that Mose b. Maimon / Maimonides (1138-1204) held the same position as Machiavelli regarding the ideal leader's character.[6] The great medieval philosopher also thought that an ideal leader has to be without character because he has to be capable (like God) of acting differently according to the changing circumstances, such that most people would view this ideal leader as embodying contradictory characteristics.

In the first two parts of this article I summarize the positions of these two philosophers on the ideal leader's character. In the third part I emphasize the different opinions of the two philosophers on the goals of political life on the one hand, and their similar understanding of the political world on the other hand. In the final part of the article I deal with the question of a possible influence of Maimonides on Machiavelli.

I. The ideal leader's lack of character according to Machiavelli

In the twenty-fifth chapter of *The Prince*, Machiavelli explains the relationship between virtue[7] and fortune. In the beginning of the chapter the author explains that fortune is dominant in half of our actions, where the other half is under our control. Further along in the same chapter, Machiavelli explains the correlation between these two parts in relation to political success. First he explains that fortune is like a destructive river: people can prepare themselves ahead of time while times are easier in order to ready themselves for more dangerous times. Machiavelli goes on to describe the way people could be fortunate in all situations:

Limiting myself more to particulars, I say that such princes as I have described live happily today, and tomorrow fall without changing their natures or any of their traits. This I believe results, first, from the causes lengthily

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5 See: *The Prince* 15-19 and 25; *Discourses on the first decade of Titus Livy*, III, 9; 41 and 43; *Ghiribizzi letter to Soderino*. – All the English translations are of the original Italian, and taken from [NICOLÒ] MACHIAVELLI: *The Chief Works and Others*, translated by A. GILBERT, 3 volumes, Durham 1965 [²1989].

6 See the *Guide of the Perplexed* I, 54. – All the English translations are based on MOSES MAIMONIDES, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, transl. with an introduction and notes by S. PINES, with an introductory essay by L. STRAUSS, Chicago [et. al.] 1963.

7 On the term 'virtue' in the thought of Machiavelli see MANSFIELD, *Machiavelli's Virtu* (n. 2 above), especially pp. 6-52. For a summary of the earlier extensive research on this topic see note 1 on pp. 315-316; E. GARVER, 'After Virtù: Rhetoric' Prudence and Moral Pluralism in Machiavelli', in: *History of Political Thought* 17 (1996), pp. 195-223.

discussed in the preceding pages, namely, that any prince who relies exclusively on Fortuna falls when she varies. I believe also that a prince succeeds who adapts his way of proceeding to the nature of the times, and conversely, one does not succeed whose procedure is out of harmony with the times…[8] On this depend variations in success: if, for one whose policy is caution and patience, time and affaire circle about in such a way that his policy is good, he continues to succeed; if time and affaire change, he falls because he does not change his way of proceeding […].[9]

In this text we see one of the most important points in the political theory of Machiavelli. Our author explains in a number of places in his political writings that there are two ways for a prince or state to attain territory and glory[10]: by fortune and virtue.[11] The most important people, which is to say those who have accomplished the most significant things, have both.[12]

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8 Here Machiavelli explains that some people have the same success in different ways because of the difference of time and affaire.

9 *The Prince*, Chapter 25. In the continuation of the chapter Machiavelli claims that no man can be so prudent as to always accommodate himself to all different and changing conditions.
Italian original: *Ma, ristringendomi più a' particulari, dico come si vede oggi questo principe felicitare, e domani ruinare, sanza avergli veduto mutare natura o qualità alcuna: il che credo che nasca, prima, dalle cagioni che si sono lungamente per lo adrieto discorse, cioè che quel principe che s'appoggia tutto in sulla fortuna, rovina, come quella varia. Credo, ancora, che sia felice quello che riscontra il modo del procedere suo con le qualità de' tempi; e similmente sia infelice quello che con il procedere suo si discordano e' tempi….Da questo ancora depende la variazione del bene: perché, se uno che si governa con respetti e pazienzia, e' tempi e le cose girono in modo che il governo suo sia buono, e' viene felicitando; ma, se e' tempi e le cose si mutano, rovina, perché non muta modo di procedere…*

10 On the important role of glory in the thought of Machiavelli see R. PRICE, 'The Theme of *Gloria* in Machiavelli', in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977), pp. 588-631; DE GRAZIA. *Machiavelli in Hell* (n. 2 above), pp. 374-380. I. BERLIN, 'The Originality of Machiavelli', in: IDEM, *Against the Current. Essays in the History of Ideas*, London 1979, pp. 25-79. Berlin argues that the originality of Machiavelli resides in his new definition of the purposes of the leader, ends that are worldly and against the Christian (and philosophical) ends. The third part of the article deals with this topic more thoroughly.

11 See for example: *The Prince* 1; 6-9; 11; 24-26; *Discourses* I 1, 4, 10-11, 19-20, 23; II Pref., 1, 22, 29; III 6, 9, 30, 42. On the relationship between the two see, for example: MANSFIELD, *Machiavelli's Virtue* (n. 2 above), pp. 47-52.

12 See especially *The Prince* 6 on Moses; Cyrus; Romulus and Theseus; and *The Prince* 26 on the new leader that must liberate Italia. On Machiavelli's opinion re Moses see A. MELAMED, 'Machiavelli on the fathers of the Jewish Nation', in: *The World Congress of Jewish Studies* 10 (1990), III 1 (Heb.), pp. 338-344;

Here Machiavelli explains an important correlation of the two; fortune is the relationship between exterior events and the nature (or character) of a person.[13] A man with a good fortune is the right man in the right place, i.e. one who's character goes well with the exterior circumstances. This is the reason that two people who act in different ways can both succeed to the same extent. Both of their character types accommodate the circumstances of their time.[14] The problem is that the nature of events changes – more than once in a typical lifetime.[15] The changing circumstances cause the leader's change of fortune. The leader who does not know how to change his actions according to the new circumstances will continue to act with the same character, thus jeopardizing his fortune. This is the Prince that 'relies exclusively on Fortuna'. This kind of leader has lost his glory and state due to not being able to change his actions to suit the altered (exterior) circumstances.[16]

The problem for leaders is that it is very difficult for them to change their character. The majority of people continue to act their entire life according to one character. The prince is due to failure because he does not know how to adapt his character according to changing situations and he tends to copy tactics that have succeeded in the past.[17] That is the reason

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J. H. GEERKEN, 'Machiavelli's Moses and Renaissance politics', in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60 (1999), pp. 579-595.

13 On fortune see, for example: STRAUSS, *Thought on Machiavelli* (n. 2 above), pp. 219-225; DE GRAZIA. *Machiavelli in Hell* (n. 2 above), pp. 202-215. On Machiavelli not being a systematic thinker and using many terms with the same meaning and using the same term with different meanings, see PRICE, The Theme of *Gloria* (n. 10 above). – There are some places (e.g. *Discourses* I, 23; III, 37) that Machiavelli uses the term fortune with a different meaning.

14 For example, this is the reason that Scipio and Hannibal succeed to the same degree though having opposite character traits (*Discourses* III, 21). In another passage (*The Prince* 17) Machiavelli tells us that Hannibal succeeds more with cruelty than Scipio with mercy. Another example is the similar success of Manlius and Valerius despite their divergent characters (*Discourses* III, 22). See also STRAUSS, *Thought on Machiavelli* (n. 2 above), pp. 161-163.

15 The reason that Pope Julius II always succeeded without changing his character is that he presided for only a short period of time.

16 An example of this kind of a leader is Soderini (*Discourse* III, 9). The aim of this chapter is to argue the same point as that in *The Prince* 25. Here Machiavelli gives another example: the different ways Fabius and Scipio deal with the Carthaginian army.

17 Machiavelli emphasizes this point in the continuation of the passage in *The Prince* 25.

that republicanism is in general a better mode of government than monarchy. The republic can more easily change the leader of the citizens according to the changing situations than the Prince can change his character.[18]

The desire to do good is one possible human character trait. This trait drives the leader to be good in all situations. According to Machiavelli, as with devotion to any other character trait, the leader who constantly does good is doing what leads to his own destruction. The leader must know when to overcome his goodness and to do the bad when the circumstances require it. This is the message of our authors in one of the most well-known passages of *The Prince*:

> [...] Because any man who under all conditions insists on making it his business to be good will surely be destroyed among so many who are not good. Hence, a prince, in order to hold his position, must acquire the power to be not good, and understand when to sue it, in accord with necessity.[19]

In the continuation of this chapter, Machiavelli lists other pairs of opposite characteristics, for example mercy and cruelty; courage and cowardice; tolerance and judgmentalism, etc. According to the author, no prince can fully possess all good qualities. His conclusion is that the prince should not be concerned with his using bad character traits in certain situations, because sticking to good character traits could cause his destruction when circumstances require using bad character traits.[20]

According to Machiavelli, although the ideal leader has to, for the most part, act with good character, at least in order to portray himself as a good person, he still must be ready to act with negative character when needed.[21]

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18 See *Discourses* I 20; III 9. On this subject see also C. NEDERMAN, 'Machiavelli and Moral Character: Principality, Republic and the Psychology of Virtue,' in: *History of Political Thought* 21 (2000), pp. 349–364.

19 *The Prince* 15. Before this quotation, Machiavelli critiques his predecessors, who described how men should live and not how they live in actuality.
Italian original: *Perché uno uomo che voglia fare in tutte le parte professione di buono, conviene rovini infra tanti che non sono buoni. Onde è necessario a uno principe, volendosi mantenere, imparare a potere essere non buono, et usarlo e non usare secondo la necessità.*

20 Machiavelli devoted some other chapters of *The Prince* 16-19 to the way the Prince has to use the bad and good side of all pairs of character traits. On this subject see also *Discourses* I 27 (in this chapter Machiavelli argued that Giovan Pagolo, who was a very bad man, had to have been even worse. He forgot his habitual character at a disadvantageous moment); *Discourses* I, 41 (on the way to change from one quality to its opposite); *Discourses* II 14; III 19-22; III 41, 44.

21 See especially *The Prince* 18 (for more examples: *The Prince* 21; *Discourses* I 25, 51; III 2). On the capability of the Prince to appear to be good but not in ac-

The leader must know not only the good aspect of all character traits, but the bad aspect, too. Moreover, he has to know not only *when* to act bad, but no less important, *how* to act bad.[22] One must note here that Machiavelli used the terms "good" and "bad" the way these terms were most commonly defined in his time. "Good" is defined as what people believe is good,[23] and according to Machiavelli it is generally better to act according to what most people would define as good.[24] The problem is that there are times that acting bad is the sole solution, and the success of the political goal of the leader justifies and requires his bad action.[25] The prince's behaviour should be "according to necessity" and not according to passions or conventional moral rules.

We can conclude that, according to Machiavelli, the ideal leader has to overcome his character.[26] Only a person that has no good or bad character, but rather knows how to use the good and bad side of each and every quality equally, can act appropriately according to changing circumstances. The ideal leader must be neither merciful nor cruel, but rather, he must know when to act with mercy and when to act with cruelty. In the thought

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tuality see: DE GRAZIA, *Machiavelli in Hell* (n. 2 above), pp. 293-317; STRAUSS, *Thought on Machiavelli* (n. 2 above), pp. 129-132 and pp. 269-270. See also *Discourses* I 14 on the fact that the prince must act as if he is full of religious sentiment even while desecrating religious principles.

22 On advice of Machiavelli on how the leader has to act bad, see for example *The Prince* 8, 16-19, 21; *Discourses* I 9, III 3,

23 On the use of the term good by Machiavelli see STRAUSS, *Thought on Machiavelli* (n. 2 above), pp. 253-264; DE GRAZIA, *Machiavelli in Hell* (n. 2 above), pp. 175-193 and 237-240. In this last passage the scholars emphasize that Machiavelli says that the Prince sometimes must refrain from good, however he does not say that the leader has to be evil; BERLIN, 'The Originality of Machiavelli' (n. 10 above).

24 Machiavelli agrees that it is better to do good than bad in a situation where both are equally viable (*Discourses* I 10).

25 On this subject see *Discourses* I 9; III 41; DE GRAZIA, *Machiavelli in Hell* (n. 2 above), pp. 258-270.

26 Here I disagree with STRAUSS, *Thought on Machiavelli* (n. 2 above), pp. 237-244. He argues that Machiavelli thought that the ideal leader had to stay in a middle path between good and bad. In my opinion, Machiavelli does not say when and how much the leader has to be good or bad. Machiavelli by definition cannot tell us about proportionality because it varies according to different circumstances (I.e. fortune). One proportion is right one time and wrong another. The ideal leader has to overcome all kinds of proportionality and be ready to change radically the proportion of his good and bad actions according to the different turns of fortune.

of Machiavelli, to be good or bad is not a goal in it of itself; both characteristics are only instruments in the hand of the ideal leader for achieving his goals.[27]

II. The lack of character of the ideal leader according to Maimonides

Maimonides deals in a number of places in his philosophical writings[28] with the definition of the ideal leader.[29] One on the most important passages wherein Maimonides describes the qualities of the ideal leader is in *Guide of the Perplexed* I 54.[30] This chapter is situated within a group of chapters that deal with divine attributes. [31] According to Maimonides, people can know only two kinds of divine attributes: negative attributes and action attrib-

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27 One must note that Machiavelli says that the leader does not have to be unjust (*The Prince* 17). However the reason for this is practical and not ideological.

28 The last part of his major legalist work, the Mishneh Torah, deals with the legal definition of the king. On this subject see: G. J. BLIDSTEIN, עקרונות במשנת הרמב"ם: עיונים במשנתו ההלכתית מדיניים, Jerusalem 1983 (²2001).

29 On the definition of the perfect leader in the thought of Maimonides see, for example: A. MELAMED, *Philosopher-King in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought*, ed. by L. E. GOODMAN, Albany, N. Y. 2003, pp. 26-60; A. MELAMED, אחותן הקטנה של החכמות: המחשבה המדינית היהודית בימי הביניים, Ra'ananah 2011, pp. 144-162; L. V. BERMAN, *Ibn Bâjjah and Maimonides. A Chapter in the History of Political Philosophy*, Ph. D. Dissertation, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1959. – On the *Imitatio Dei* in Maimonides see H. KREISEL, *Maimonides' Political Thought: Studies in Ethics, Law and the Human Ideal,* New York 1999, pp. 125-158; H. KASHER, פירושי הרמב"ם לסיפור נקרת-הצור, in: *Da'at* 35 (1995), pp. 29-66; M. KELLNER, *Maimonides on Human Perfection,* Atlanta 1990 (= Brown Judaic Studies, vol. 202), pp. 47-61; A. S. BRUCKSTEIN, 'How Can Ethics Be Taught: "Socratic" and "Post-Socratic" Method in Maimonides' Theory of Emulation', in: *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (1997), pp. 268-284.

30 Another important place is *Guide of the Perplexed* III 51-54.

31 *Guide of the Perplexed* I 35-70. On the opinion of Maimonides on divine attributes see: D. KAUFMANN, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der Jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters: von Saadja bis Maimûni*, Gotha 1872 [repr. Amsterdam 1967], pp. 363-501; H. A. WOLFSON. 'Maimonides on Negative Attributes', in: S. LIEBERMAN, S. ZEITLIN, S. SPIEGEL, A. MARX (eds.), *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume*, New York 1945, pp. 411–446; H. A. WOLFSON. 'The Aristotelian Predicables and Maimonides' Division of Attributes', in: I. DAVIDSON (ed.), *Essays and Studies in Memory of L. R. Miller*, New York 1938, pp. 201–234; H. A. WOLFSON. 'Maimonides and Gersonides on Divine Attributes as Ambiguous Terms', in: M. DAVIS (ed.), *Mordecai M. Kaplan Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* – English section, New York 1953, pp. 515–530; H. Kasher, מיתוס "האל הכועס" במורה נבוכים, in: *Eshel Be'er Sheva* 4 (1996), pp. 95-111.

utes.[32] In the first part of the book, Chapter 54, Maimonides comments on the discussion between Moses and God in Exodus 33-34.[33] As a part of his commentary, Maimonides interprets the rabbinic concept known as the "Thirteen Attributes of God" and their relation to the government of the ideal leader:

The meaning here is not that He (God) possesses moral qualities, but that he performs actions resembling the actions that in us proceed from moral qualities – I mean from aptitudes of the soul; the meaning is not that He, may He be exalted, possesses aptitudes of the soul [...][34] This was [Moses'] ultimate object in his demand [...][35] "that is (the Jewish people) a people for the government of which I need to perform action that I must seek to make similar to Thy actions in governing them [...].[36]

In the continuation of this passage, Maimonides describes God's attributes of actions, for example graciousness and pity on the one hand, and jealousy and anger on the other. God's actions are portrayed in natural phenomena. For example, the way God watches over an embryo appears to the human eye as an act of mercy. A natural disaster is another example of how it seems as if God has human-like attributes, in this case, anger. We have to note that this is another difference between Machiavelli and Maimonides. Machiavelli believed that the perfect leader has to learn from ancient history (Discourses I Pref.), whereas Maimonides held that he has to learn from the nature of the world (which is how God governs the world). Maimonides emphasizes that all these characteristics are not truly possessed by God. God's actions are interpreted as being such characteristics due to the fact that people who act the same would possess these very characteristics. After this description of the divine actions, Maimonides describes the way the ideal leader should emulate the divine manner of governing:

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32 See especially *Guide of the Perplexed* I 52.

33 According to Maimonides, Moses requested here two things: to know the essence of God and to know all of His attributes. God responded that he cannot accede to the first request. God's response to the second request was the Thirteen Attributes. On this subject see H. KASHER, הרמב"ם פירושי (n. 29 above).

34 Here Maimonides tells us that these specific thirteen characteristics are the ways that God gives existence to humans and governs them.

35 Maimonides, see Exodus 33: 13.

36 *Guide of the Perplexed* I 54. Original in Judeo-Arabic:
אלד'י ואלמעני הנא ליס אנה ד'ו אכ'לאק, בל פאעל אפעאל שביהה באלאפעאל אלצאדרה מנא ען אכ'לאק, אעני ען היאת נפסאניה, לא אנה תעאלי ד'ו היאת נפסאניה ... והד'א כאן אכ'ר גרץ' סואלה... אנא מחתאג' לתדבירהם באפעאל אתקיל בהא אפעאלך פי תדבירהם....

It behooves the governor of a city, if he is a prophet, to acquire similarity to these attributes, so that these actions may proceed from him according to a determined measure and according to the desert[37] of the people who are affected by them, and not merely because of his following of a passion. He should not let loose the reins of anger nor let passion gain mastery over him, for all passions are evil; but, on the contrary, he should guard against them as far as this lies within the capacity of man. Sometimes, with regard to some people, he should be merciful and gracious, not out of mere compassion and pity, but in accordance with what is fitting. Sometimes, with regard to some people, he should maintain a pose of anger and jealousy, and avenge in accordance with their desert, not out of mere anger; so he may order an individual to be burned without being angry and incensed with him, and without hating him, because he perceives the desert of that individual and considers the great benefit that many people will derive from the accomplishment of the action in question [...].[38]

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37 The translation of this important word (which appears three times in this passage) differs in the different medieval translations. The original Arabic is אסתחקאק. R. Shemuel ibn Tibbon translated the first לפי הדין the second ראוי and the third התחייבו. The other Hebrew translator Jehudah Alharizi translated the first and the second: כפי הראוי and the third: חייב. The Latin translation (by Augustinus Justinianus *alias* Agostino Giustiniani, *Rabbi Mossei Aegyptii Dux seu Director dubitantum aut perplexorum.* Paris 1520), which uses the Hebrew of Alharizi, translated the first 'convenit' the second 'merentur' and the third 'debet' (need in English). One must note that the translation of Ibn Tibbon differs from the other translations as to how much personal justice is present in the condemnation of the sinner. According to Alharizi and the Latin translation the lector can understand that judgment goes essentially according to that which benefits the maintenance of the society. This meaning is more difficult according to the translation of Ibn Tibbon. The translation of Ibn Tibbon is the translation that was generally used by Jewish philosophers in the Middle Ages. For this reason, their interpretations of this passage are not close to the interpretation of Machiavelli. According to Maimonides, God as a ruler has to act sometimes in a way that hurts some particular person for the benefit of society (see *Guide of the Perplexed* III 34 on the laws of nature and the laws of the Torah).

38 *Guide of the Perplexed* I 54. In the continuation of this passage Maimonides explains that the actions of the ideal leader have to be generally good (in the sense of Machiavelli). Original in Judeo-Arabic:

וינבגי למדבר אלמדינה אד'א כאן נביא אן יתשבה בהד'ה אלצפאת ותצדר ענה הד'ה אלאפעאל בתקדיר ובחסב אסתחקאק, לא במג'רד תבע אלאנפעאל, ולא יטלק ענאן אלגצ'ב ולא ימכן אלאנפעאלאת מנה, אד' כל אנפעאל שר, בל יתחאמאהא חסב טאקה' אלאנסאן, פיכון תארה לבעץ' אלנאס רחום וחנון לא למג'רד אלרקה ואלשפקה אלא בחסב מא ילזם, ויכון תארה לבעץ' אלנאס נוטר ונוקם ובעל חמה בחסב אסתחקאקהם לא במג'רד אלגצ'ב, חתי אנה

In this important passage, Maimonides describes one of the main qualities the ideal leader must acquire. The leader must be without character[39] to whatever extent a human can possibly achieve that goal.[40] According to Maimonides "all passions are evil" and all character leads to passions.[41] A leader that is truly gracious or cruel, acts not according to the rational understanding of the situation, but rather according to the character that pushes him to be excessively cruel or gracious. The ideal leader must act cruelly at times and graciously at others, depending on the circumstances. The leader must choose which action to apply only on the basis of the objective understanding of the situation. In the opinion of Maimonides, only the leader without character can succeed in altering his actions according to the different exterior circumstances. In this opinion the leader's behaviour should be "according to necessity" and not according to passions or conventional moral rules.

Here Maimonides goes farther than Aristotle's and Al-Farabi's theories of the mean,[42] which he accepts and adopts in several places.[43] The ideal

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יאמר בחרק אלשכ'ץ והו גיר חריג' ולא גצ'וב ולא באגץ' פיה בל בחסב מא יראה מן אסתחקאקה, וילחט' מא פי איקאע הד'א אלפעל מן אלמנפעה אלעט'ימה בכ'לק כת'יר.

39 For the opinion of Maimonides' biological and other physical influences on people, see G. FREUDENTHAL, 'La détermination partielle, biologique et climatologique, de la félicité humaine: Maimonide versus al-Färäbī à propos des influences célestes', in: T. LEVY ET R. RASHED (eds.), *Maimonide philosophe et savant (1138-1204)*, Leuven 2004, pp. 79–129.

40 Both Machiavelli and Maimonides were aware of the fact that no human can really be without any character. They describe the ultimate level that the ideal leader must strive to attain.

41 In the phrase before the quoted passage, Maimonides stated that God is without aptitude of the soul היאת נפסאניה (here called character traits) and passions.

42 On this theory see ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics* I and also III and IV *Eudemian Ethics* II, 3 and III; AL-FARABI, *Fusūl al-Madanī* I, 16.

43 See especially *Eight Chapters*, especially chapter 4. All quotes from the *Eight Chapters* are taken from R. L. WEISS with CH. E. BUTTERWORTH, *Ethical Writings of Maimonides*, New York 1975. – On the influences of Al-Farabi on the opinion of Maimonides on this subject see H. DAVIDSON, 'Maimonides' *Shemonah Peraqim* and Alfarabi's *Fusūl Al-Madanī*', in: A. HYMAN (ed.), *Essays in Medieval Jewish and Islamic Philosophy*, New York 1977, pp 116-133; R. L. WEISS, *Maimonides' Ethics - The Encounter of Philosophic and Religion Morality,* Chicago 1991, pp. 9-32. – On the general view of Maimonides regarding the doctrine of the mean and his relation to the opinion of Aristotle: M. FOX, 'The Doctrine of the Mean in Aristotle and Maimonides: A Comparative Study', in: S. STEIN and R. LOEWE (eds.), *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History*, London 1979, pp. 93-120; D. H. FRANK, 'Humility as a Virtue: A Maimonide-

leader does not have to be in the mean between different extreme characteristics (or aptitudes of the soul), for both extremes are bad.[44] Living according to the golden mean is a level of perfection that is sufficient for the morality of a regular man that lives only a quite private life. However, this level is not enough for the ideal leader who has to also take extreme actions according to changing circumstances. The ideal leader cannot only

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an Critique of Aristotle's Ethics', in: E. L. ORMSBY (ed.), *Moses Maimonides and his Time,* Washington 1989, pp. 89-99; D. H. FRANK, "'With all your Heart and with all your Soul…". The Moral Psychology of the Shemonah Peraqim', in: H. LEVINE and R. S. COHEN (eds.), *Maimonides and the Sciences,* Dordrecht 2000, pp. 25-33; J. JACOBS. 'Aristotle and Maimonides: The Ethics of Perfection and the Perfection of Ethics', in: *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76 (2002), pp. 145-163. – On the debasement of the doctrine of the mean by the perfect man see H. KREISEL, *Maimonides' Political Thought* (n. 29 above), pp. 159-188 especially pp. 185-172. – On the position of Maimonides on political perfection coming after perfection of the intellect, which itself is acquired after achieving moral perfection, see *Guide of the Perplexed* III, 54 and H. KREISEL, *Maimonides' Political Thought* (n. 29 above), pp. 125-141; A. ALTMANN, 'Maimonides 'Four Perfections", in: *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), pp. 15-24.

44 On the distinction between good and evil, see S. KLEIN-BRASLAVY, פירוש הרמב"ם לסיפורים על אדם בפרשת בראשית - פרקים בתורת האדם של הרמב"ם, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 141-149; W. Z. HARVEY, הרמב"ם ושפינוזה על ידיעת טוב ורע, in: *Iyyun; the Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly* 28 (1978), pp. 167-185; H. KREISEL, *Maimonides' Political Thought* (n. 29 above), pp. 93-124; H. KASHER, "'Hakham", "Hasid", and "Tov", in Maimonides' Writing: A Study in Terms and their Reference', in: *Maimonidean Studies* 4 (2000), pp. 81-106. An important difference between Maimonides and Machiavelli is their different utilization of the term 'good'. Machiavelli uses this term, in the majority of cases, in accordance with the view of the majority of society. The term in the thought of Machiavelli has a determinate moral significance. This is the reason why the ideal leader has to act according to external circumstances even if these actions are ostensibly bad. In the thought of Maimonides, the definition of good is more flexible. (According to W. Z. Harvey and S. Klein-Braslavy, the definition of good is more subjective than it is according to H. Kreisel, but even in his opinion good is not a definite moral act but rather the term that points to that which has a noble purpose and existence). For this reason, Maimonides does not say that the ideal leader has to act badly. He has to be able to be both gracious and cruel (the kind of action that Machiavelli called bad). However, according to Maimonides, if the external situation requires the cruel action, this action is not to be considered as a bad action. In short, the difference between the utilization of the term by the two philosophers is very different and this difference shows a difference in their educational goals. However this difference does not influence the way the ideal leader should act, which is essentially the same according to the two philosophers.

live a life balanced between the different extremes, but must overcome all sense of character. An ordinary person should not be cruel or overly forgiving, and in general should not go to any extreme. For the ordinary person, attaining the level of Aristotle's theory of the mean[45] is enough. However the ideal leader has to be able to engage in extreme graciousness or cruelty (for example, ordering to burn someone or killing an entire population).[46] Only leaders that have overcome all the categories of character can achieve both extreme actions. The theory of the mean is by definition in the category of character. In other words, the mean is the middle good character, that falls between two extremes that are both examples of having a bad character. In this passage, Maimonides argues that in fact the political animal has to overcome the moral human if he wants not only to be a person to himself, but a perfect leader as well.[47]

The sentimental passion of the regular moral person who lives according to the theory of the mean is his love of the middle road. This love prevents him from going to any extreme that is not necessary for the political government of society. Only the leader who overcomes all character (including the character of the regular moral man who acts according to

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45 In Maimonidean interpretation, such is not precisely the view of Aristotle himself.

46 In the continuation of *Guide of the Perplexed* I 54, Maimonides quotes the example of the annihilation of the seven Canaanite nations as an example of necessary cruelty. In the next chapter we will see the reason for these cruel actions.

47 However, it is clear that if the people do not have a perfect political person who overcomes all sense of character, the moral person who lives according to the theory of the mean is better than an immoral person who acts according to one extreme. Maimonides does not claim that the ideal leader is immoral, rather, that his public responsibility necessarily means that he must overcome all sentimental feelings about his political actions. This definition of the role of the ideal leader does not contradict the theory of the mean. We can also interpret the moral standing of an ideal political leader with the moral standing of a regular person who acts according to the theory of the mean. According to Maimonides, that person has to sometimes act radically in order to equilibrate his or her qualities. A glutton has to eat very little in aiming to equilibrate his character (*Eight Chapters*, chapter 4). The intellect of this person understands that he has a bad character which obligates him to act in an extreme manner against his character. When his character is equilibrated he has to return to the mean. The leader who wishes to act according to the intellect of his society has to understand the situation of his society. (God, whom the leader is supposed to imitate, is explicitly compared with the intellect of the world in Guide I 72). After understanding that the situation (because of internal or external problems) requires extreme action in order to preserve the equality of society (or its life), he has to act in an extreme way.

the mean) can act in every way just according to the necessary exterior circumstances and to succeed in fulfilling his political goals.

In this interpretation I agree with S. Schwarzschild,[48] that Maimonides overcomes the theory of the mean using the *Imitatio Dei*. However, I do not agree with him in his claim that the *Imitatio Dei* is also a moral perfection. In my opinion, Maimonides argues that the ability of the ideal leader to do both cruel and gracious actions according to the circumstances overcomes all moral perfection (or goes to another degree of morality that is in common with the first only in name). According to my interpretation of Maimonides, all moral levels are proportional to the aptitude of the soul (or character) and the level of the ideal leader overcomes all sentimental relation to action, that is, all the different character. This leader must, at the same time, overcome in addition, the regular morality that this character is defined as.

Maimonides describes a good person (one who acts according to the theory of the mean)[49] in the beginning of the third chapter of his work *Eight Chapters*:

The health of the soul consists in its aptitudes[50] and those of its parts being such that it always does good and fine things and performs noble actions. Its sickness consists in its aptitudes and those of its parts being such that it always does ugly things and performs base actions[51]

In this passage Maimonides defines a good person (one with a healthy soul) and a bad person (one with a sick soul) according to the aptitude (היאת) of his or her soul. A good person is one whose aptitude pushes him to always do what is good, whereas a bad person's aptitude presses him in the opposite direction. The aptitude of the soul is the character of the person that drives him to do actions that are bad or good.[52] It is important

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48 'Moral Radicalism and "Middlingness" in the Ethic of Maimonides', in: M. KELLNER (ed.), *The Pursuit of the Ideal: Jewish Writings of Steven Schwarzschlid,* New York 1990, pp. 137-160.

49 On the list of examples of the good and the bad aptitudes (היאת) of the soul and the relationship between them and the way of the mean, see *Eight Chapters*, chapter 4.

50 Weiss translates the word היאת as conditions. I translate it as 'aptitudes' according to the translation of Pines (*Guide of the Perplexed* I 54).

51 Judeo-Arabic original:
פצחה' אלנפס אן תכון היאתהא והיאת אג'זאיהא היאת תפעל בהא אבדא אלכ'יראת ואלחסנאת ואלאפעאל אלג'מילה, ומרצ'הא אן תכון היאתהא והיאת אג'זאיהא היאת תפעל בהא אבדא אלשרור ואלסיאת ואלאפעאל אלקביחה.

52 In *Guide of the Perplexed* I 52 Maimonides explains that the aptitudes (היאת) of

to note that in *Guide* I 54[53] (and also in I 52) Maimonides explicitly notes that God has no aptitude. The ideal leader who imitates God has to overcome all kinds of aptitudes that push him to do good or bad in order to be ready to apply any action according to the circumstances.[54]

We can conclude that, according to Maimonides, the ideal leader must overcome all character (aptitude of the soul) that pushes him (through the passion that the character builds) to act in a monolithic way (bad or good). This leader has to be ready to sometimes act in a way most people would define as cruel or overly gracious, according to the circumstances. Maimonides believes that morality is an important goal, but the ideal leader has to overcome the degree of (regular) morality and the different characteristics that define the moral stature of a person in order to be able to fulfill his political mission.

III. The divergence of the two philosophers on the goal of political life

In the two preceding parts of the article we saw that Machiavelli and Maimonides both thought that the ideal leader has to overcome his character and his sentimental relation to his actions. This leader has to be ready to carry out all necessary actions according to changing circumstances in order to fulfill his political goals. Only the overcoming of character and sentimentality makes it possible for the leader to carry out all kinds of actions according to the situation. In this part of the article, we will see that the two philosophers disagree on the goal of political life, despite the similarity of their understanding of politics and of the relation between politics and morality.

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the soul contain all speculative moral habits or dispositions. In his *Eight Chapters*, Maimonides writes especially about the last kind of these aptitudes. On the opinion that also according to Aristotle ethic s are not a function of the rational part of the soul see *Nicomachean Ethics* II, 1 and also *Eudemian Ethics* II, 1. In this chapter, Aristotle describes ethics as part of the non-rational part of the soul.

53 In the passage right before the quoted passage, Maimonides explains that the ideal leader has to imitate the way of God.

54 In the laws of personal development (הלכות דעות) II, 3 Maimonides explains that there are some character traits (דעות in the original Hebrew) that people have to stay away from entirely, especially anger. Here he also explains that sometimes a leader, be it a public leader or family leader, has to act as if he is angry for educational purposes.

According to Machiavelli, the ultimate goal of the political leader (or of the political life of a nation or a republic) is Gloria (glory).[55] Gloria is preferable to all other political goals. For this reason, Machiavelli preferred the Roman Republic over Sparta; Rome achieved more glory than Sparta, which lived more time freely than Rome.[56] The importance of glory is also the reason why the Italian philosopher preferred a bad national situation (like the situation of Italy in his time) to a good one. A poor political situation affords greater potential to attain glory than a good one.[57]

According to Machiavelli, the goal of the ideal leader is to overcome character, while that of the republic is to change the head of the citizens according to the circumstances, with the ultimate aim being to reach maximum glory.

The goal of political life for the ideal leader[58] according to Maimonides is to improve the opinions of his people.[59] The success of the political life

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55 On the definition of Gloria in Machiavelli see, for example: PRICE, 'The Theme of *Gloria* (n. 10 above). On another understanding of Machiavelli that posits the care of the leader for the common good of his citizens, see DE GRAZIA, *Machiavelli in Hell* (n. 2 above), pp. 157-193.

56 *Discourse* I 1, 6. It is true that in certain situations a leader has to know how to suffer offense in order to save the country. However, it is only a temporary offense. To not suffer the offense thus causing the fall of the state is less glorious in the long term than to suffer the offense and to save the state (*Discourse* III, 41, 47).

57 See, for example *The Prince* 6, 26.

58 The debate about Maimonides' view of the aim of philosophy is one of the more debated subjects in modern scholarship. For example: S. PINES, 'The Limitation of Human Knowledge According to al-Farabi, Ibn Bajja and Maimonides,' in: I. TWERSKY (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, Cambridge, Mass. 1979, pp. 82-109; S. PINES, 'Les limites de la métaphysique selon al-Farabi, Ibn Bajja et Maimonides: sources et antitheses de ces doctrines chez Alexandre d'Aprodise et Themistius,' in: *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 13. (1981), pp. 211-225. Pines argues that Maimonides did not believe in the capacity of man to acquire real philosophical knowledge (one of the important consequences of his opinion is the lack of any possibility of life after death) and concludes that the higher perfection of a human is in the domain of the political leadership of the society; S. SCHWARZSCHILD, 'Moral Radicalism' (n. 48 above). He also argues that the higher perfection of a human is in the domain of morality (a different morality than the morality of regular people). A. ALTMANN, 'Maimonides on the Intellect and the Scope of Metaphysics,' in: IDEM, *Von der mittelalterlichen zur modernen Aufklärung*, Tübingen 1987 (= Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism, vol. 2), pp. 60-129; H. A. DAVIDSON, 'Maimonides on Metaphysical Knowledge,' in: *Maimonidean*

of the leader is essential in order to achieve his philosophical-educational goals.[60] According to the medieval philosopher, the final aim of overcoming the tendency to do good or bad and the capacity of the ideal leader to exploit the two character traits is to improve the opinions of his people.[61]

The two philosophers also disagree on their relation to morality. Maimonides taught morality and without a doubt, viewed morality as an im-

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Studies 3 (1992), pp. 49-103, and S. STROUMSA, '"True Felicity": Paradise in the Thought of Avicenna and Maimonides,' in: *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998), pp. 51-77. According to W. Z. Harvey ('Maimonides on Human Perfection, Awe, and Politics,' in: I. ROBINSON, L. KAPLAN, J. BAUER [eds.], *The Thought of Maimonides Philosophical and Legal Studies*, New York 1991, pp. 1-15), and H. Kreisel (*Maimonides' Political Thought* [n. 29 above], pp. 125-150), the perfection of the intellect does not contradict the leadership of the society. Political leadership is a result of the perfection of the intellect. On human perfection as a legalist-Jewish perfection see also M. KELLNER, *Maimonides on Human Perfection* (n. 29 above). – One must note that even researchers who claim that the ultimate goal is moral (like Schwarzschild) agree that the kind of morality associated with the leader overcomes the regular morality of the people (which is based on the theory of the mean).

59 See for example: *Guide of the Perplexed* III 27 (on the difference between a divine and a human law); *Laws on the Foundations of the Torah*. Maimonides himself tried to improve the opinion of his people in a few ways by establishing principles of faith. On this subject see M. KELLNER, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought: from Maimonides to Abravanel*, Oxford 1986. Maimonides also includes in his legalist work the basis of his philosophical opinions. On this subject see, for example, I. TWERSKY, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*, New Haven / London 1980, pp. 77-81 and pp. 356-514.

60 Similar to a person who without the tranquillity that leads to the perfection of the body, cannot achieve the more important goal of perfection of the soul.

61 We see that, according to Maimonides, the perfect leader has to imitate the actions of God. In *Guide of the Perplexed* III 27, Maimonides explains that the divine laws have two goals: perfection of the body and perfection of the soul. The perfection of the soul is the more important goal, but in order to achieve it, a human must first achieve perfection of the body.

portant goal,[62] albeit not the ultimate goal.[63] In contrast to this position, Machiavelli's opinion on morality is not clear.[64]

We can summarize that the two philosophers agree generally on their opinion of realpolitik. They both believed (in contrast to almost all political thinkers of their time and before them) that (regular) morality has to be overcome in politics. In contrast to the general opinion of their time, and despite their disagreement on the goal of political life and the value of morality, they both agree that moral sentiment has to be overcome by the political judgment of the ideal leader. They both agree that the ideal leader must achieve goals by occasionally justifying actions that are normally judged as bad. We can conclude that the Jewish medieval philosopher and the Italian Renaissance thinker disagree on almost everything. They disagree on the essence of man, on the goal of politics, and on a plethora of other points. However, they agree on one important point, which is in fact one of the bases of modern real-politik. They understand and teach that in order to succeed as a political leader, one has to rationally analyze the situation without any non-rational sentiments, including moral feelings. It is interesting to note that this point, that according to some scholars is the main new point in the thought of Machiavelli, existed also in the political philosophy of Maimonides.

IV. A possible influence of Maimonides on Machiavelli

This article has demonstrated that Maimonides and Machiavelli share common themes in their political philosophy, with both being relatively original for their time. This similarity raises the question of a possible

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62 For example, see *Eight Chapters*; *Law of correct beliefs* (הלכות דעות are essentially moral. In *Guide of the Perplexed* III 54 and II 36 Maimonides talks about the (relative) importance of morality.

63 This is the case even for those researchers who believe that the ultimate goal, according to Maimonides, is not a philosophical one. This goal is a political one that overcomes the level of regular morality.

64 In some of Machiavelli's theatrical plays he gives positive descriptions of erstwhile heroes who do certain things that with no doubt Maimonides would qualify as immoral (especially adultery in Mandragola, for example). Part of the difference can be attributed to the difference between their writings, but this difference itself is a result of their opposite philosophical opinions. On the relation of Machiavelli to morality, see STRAUSS, *Thought on Machiavelli* (n. 2 above), pp. 231-299.

influence of Maimonides on the thought of Machiavelli.[65] There are fourth different ways that Machiavelli could have read or heard of the political thought of Maimonides. The first is the lecture by Machiavelli of one copy of the mediaeval translation of the Guide. The second way Machiavelli may have come in contact with Maimonides political thought is through the quoting of Maimonides in Latin scholastics.[66] The third way is through Christian humanists writing at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century. The fourth possible way is through Jewish contemporaries who were familiar with Maimonides writings.

The first way is that Machiavelli could have read one copy of the Guide that existed in Florence during his time (we will see that Pico della Mirandola held two copy of the Latin translation the Guide).

Regarding the second way in which Machiavelli may have heard of Maimonides's political thought, Maimonides had an important influence on the medieval Christians in a number of subjects. These subjects include philosophy, theology, the interpretation of the Bible, medicine, astrology and the Christian part of the Jewish-Christian debate. A significant percentage of the major scholastic thinkers, including Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Master Eckhart and Duns Scotus, used Maimonides' writings, especially the Guide of the Perplexed, which had been translated to Latin by 1246. Machiavelli was probably familiar with scholastic literature,[67] which continued to be a part of the basic studies in Italy at the end of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th. However, I do not think that it is likely that Machiavelli was familiar with Maimonides's opinion on the lack of character of the ideal leader through the scholastics. We do not find any influence of Maimonides on scholastics with regard to political philosophy, and I did not find any scholastic quotes of Maimonides on this subject.

With regard to the third way in which Machiavelli may have known of Maimonides; Florence was one of the centers of the humanist renaissance

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65 Machiavelli does not cite any work of Maimonides, however Machiavelli regularly does not cite any of his medieval sources, and only few of his ancient sources (. The only way to identify any influence is to compare the opinion of Machiavelli with that of an earlier philosopher and evaluate the probability of an influence.

66 On the influence of Maimonides on the medieval scholastic, see especially G. K. HASSELHOFF, *Dicit Rabbi Moyses. Studien zum Bild von Moses Maimonides im lateinischen Westen vom 13. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, Würzburg 2004.

67 On the utilization by Machiavelli of scholastic literature see for example: C. J. NEDERMAN, 'Amazing Grace: Fortune, God, and Free Will in Machiavelli's Thought', in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60 (1999), pp. 617-638.

during Machiavelli's lifetime, especially during the period of his youth. Part of Renaissance humanism was a new interest in Jewish texts and books. In Florence lived one of the most well know Hebraists of the Renaissance, Pico della Mirandola, who possessed two copies of the Guide of the Perplexed in Latin.[68] During Machiavelli's lifetime, the Guide was also translated into Latin by the Italian Bishop Aqostino Giustiniani, and published in Paris in 1520. It is possible that the young Machiavelli, who loved culture and studies,[69] could have heard about Maimonides from one of the humanists of Florence.

Regarding the fourth possible way in which Machiavelli may have heard of Maimonides thought, Florence, during Machiavelli's youth, had an important Jewish community.[70] At this time there were a number of Jewish philosophers who no doubt were well acquainted with Maimonides' major philosophical works.[71] The most important of these philosophers was Elijah Delmedigo, who taught philosophy in Florence, both to Jews and non-Jews, probably until 1485 (with teaching stints both before and after in Padua). Another important Jewish philosopher was Jochanan Alemanno, who lived in Florence probably between 1488 and 1497 and also taught philosophy to Jews and Christians. There is also some possibility that Jehuda Abrabanel spend time in Florence before 1501. Many important Rabbis of the Jewish community[72] in Florence knew philosophy well and were familiar with Maimonides' Guide.[73]

In conclusion, we first saw that the lack of character of the leader is an original point in the thought of Machiavelli that does not have any other more probable source than Maimonides. Secondly, it is possible that Machiavelli had read a Latin translation belonging to Pico della Mirandola

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68 HASSELHOFF, *Dicit Rabbi Moyses* (n. 66 above), p. 128

69 On the youth of Machiavelli see DE GRAZIA, *Machiavelli in Hell* (n. 2 above), pp. 3-16.

70 On the history of the Jewish community of Florence see M. D. (U.) CASSUTO, היהודים בפירנצי בתקופת הרניסאנס, Jerusalem 1967, especially pp. 3-90. Between 1497 and 1512, they did not have an important community in Florence due to the expulsion of the Jewish money-lenders by the republican government. However, there still exists a small Jewish community which grew after the final repeal of the expulsion order following the return of the Medici in 1530.

71 On the Jewish relationship with humanists in Florence see CASSUTO, היהודים בפירנצי (n. 70 above), pp. 214-254.

72 On this Rabbi see CASSUTO, בפירנצי היהודים (n. 70 above), pp. 191-213.

73 It is important to note that the *Guide of the Perplexed* (in Hebrew) was first published in Italy towards the end of the 15th century.

or more probably heard about the opinion of Maimonides from a Christian humanist or a Jewish philosopher. The conclusion of these two points is, in my opinion, enough to assume that there is some probability that Maimonides had some influence on Machiavelli. However, due to lack of quotes and literally proof, I cannot give any definite confirmation of this influence, and it is also possible that their common opinion regarding the lack of character and lack of (regular) morality of the ideal leader derives only from their original minds and their own political experiences.