

MACHIAVELLI IN THE ROMANIAN
CULTURE — INFLUENCES AND INTERFERENCES¹

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“Either there must, after all, be something peculiarly enigmatical in Machiavelli’s writings, or else their interpretation must have been rendered impossible by their arbitrary application to given moments in subsequent history, or, finally, criticism must have been unnaturally perverse.”

L. A. Burd²

Abstract. *This article refers to the presence of Machiavelli in Romanian culture, based on the distinction between the direct influence of Machiavelli and the interference of machiavellian writings with other cultural creations. Most of the article refers to the first Romanian author which commented on the writings of the Florentine Secretary: the Phanariote ruler of Moldavia and Wallachia from the 18th century Nicolae Mavrocordat.*

Keywords: *Machiavelli, cultural interferences, Romanian culture in the 18th century, Nicolae Mavrocordat, Phanariote ruler.*

If it is true that “books have their own destiny” (*pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli*, as Terentianus Maurus stated), the destiny of Machiavelli’s books in the Romanian culture is not without interest, especially for a better understanding of the defining of our cultural history.

The Machiavelli’s case is unlike, for less two reasons. The first one, because Machiavelli’s opera is revealing for the installation inside modernity’s specific themes culture: individualism, the subjective (personal) relationship with history, the parting of the ways between politics and the realm of the sacred, and the instrumental rationality. Machiavelli’s evocation serves mostly in this respect, and in different contexts, as a shortening (a *shortcut* in the postmodern jargon) for this themes, each of them considered individually or seen as a cultural constellation.

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² L.A. Burd, *Preface*, in vol. II PRINCIPE by Niccolò Machiavelli edited by L. Arthur Burd with an Introduction by Lord Acton, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1891, p. 12.

The second reason is that Machiavelli's figure contains an inevitable ambiguity. Inside the history of ideas, functions since 16th century the *Machiavellian vs. Machiavellianism* conceptual frame, which is revealing for the orientation of a culture, or we could say, borrowing a term well spread in the Modern German Culture, for the *Weltanschauung*³ of a cultural community.

One has to consider the observation that the name of Machiavelli is cited many times in the Romanian culture, starting as we will see, from the first part of the 18th century. In the 19th century, at its end, the citation of the author of *The Prince* becomes, as it were, a currency on the market of ideas in the printed press of the time. The personality and the work of the Florentine author was of interest for extremely diverse scholars such as I. Heliade Rădulescu (who includes *The Prince* in his programme of translations into Romanian language of the fundamental universal works), Simion Bărnuțiu, Ion Ghica, Mihai Eminescu, I. L. Caragiale, C. Antoniadă, Mircea Eliade or Nina Façon. Even more, within an enthusiastic zeal lacking any critical spirit, some researchers of the ancient Romanian literature, attempted at some point to read *The Teachings* (*Învățăturile...*) said to be of Neagoe Basarab as if they were an Eastern equivalent of *De principatibus*, written by Machiavelli⁴.

With all this reiterated interest during times, the translations of Machiavellian works are rare and, in depth, of a rather doubtful quality, if not by the Romanian equivalent of the Florentine original, anyway by the rather obsolete critical apparatus. Anyhow, even if currently the most significant writing of Machiavelli *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* is not yet translated into Romanian language. As a consequence one can not talk of a real and systematic influence of the Machiavellian ideas in Romanian culture, because, for a long while Machiavelli's writings had a rather step destiny and a sort of random circulation, most of the times being undertaken through other languages (French, German). A proof is, in this respect, the late apparition of a first integral translation of a writing belonging to Machiavelli, the first translation of *The Prince*, in a small volume published in 1910, the work of a (nowadays unknown) Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) Grigore Handoca, who signs it mentioning his quality of former Prefect of the Counties Prahova and Putna⁵.

³ Related to this term it is nevertheless worth mentioning its relatively metaphoric character, which determines that two highly different authors such as Karl Barth and Martin Heidegger to contest, in more or less radical terms, its relevance, one, for the Christian feeling, the other, for philosophical reflection.

⁴ In fact, *The Teachings* (*Învățăturile...*) of Neagoe, far from having the status of a cultural unique product, belong to a family of writings similar as intent, known within the context of Eastern Orthodoxy (as a sort of versions of the Western *Fürstenspiegeln*) and attributed to important leaders: Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, Vladimir Monomakh, and so on.

⁵ *Principele*, [by N. Machiavelli. Translation into the Romanian language from French after C. Ferrari, by Lieutenant-Colonel Grigore Handoca, former Prefect of Putna and Prahova and President of Prahova County Council, Ploiești (*Democratul* Printing House), 1910 (17 x 10,5). VI, pp. 33-167. A second edition, in vol. *Arta de a guverna și armatele naționale*, by N. Machiavelli. Translation, [after] G. Ferrari, by retired Lieutenant-Colonel Gr. Handoca, former Prefect of Putna and Prahova, Bucharest, Ed. Librăriei Alcalay & Co., [1916]. (14,5 x 10). VIII-190 p. (*Biblioteca pentru toți* Collection, 958-959). The volume includes also: *Machiavelli și opera sa*, by G. Ferrari, "the French translator of this work" (pp. 9-54). (Quoted after the National Retrospective Bibliography, internet: www.biblacad.ro).

Translations of several chapters from the above mentioned Machiavellian writing was made by Mihai Eminescu, a few decades earlier, probably after a popular German edition. In his political articles, but also in the manuscript notes of the poet there are frequent references to the most known work of the Florentine secretary. Some of this references show that Eminescu has a conventional vision on *The Prince* of Machiavelli, read rather as an epitome of a cynical political philosophy⁶ (what is usually known as *Machiavellianism*⁷). Translations of the writings of Machiavelli and their related comments appear also at I.L. Caragiale, who adapted and localized *Favola di Belfagor Arcidiavolo* (known also with the title *Il demonio che prese moglie*) by Machiavelli into a short story *Kir Ianulea*⁸.

⁶ With one exception though, of a significant paragraph from the article [*Nu vom discuta cu "Românul" principii...*] published in the journal *Timpu*, VI, no. 99, 8 May 1881: "Machiavelli himself, this connoisseur of human nature, as well in its evil parts as in its good ones, if he admits, *in usum Delphini*, or better, to the benefit of the unity of Italy, the despotic rule of the House of Borgia, on the other hand he recognizes for the oligarchic regime a power of resistance against the agents of decomposition that no other form of ruling attains" (Mihai Eminescu, *Opere*, V. *Publicistică*, Academia Română, Univers enciclopedic, Bucharest, 2000, p. 568 *sqq.*). This fragment develops certain ideas from *De principatibus*, but (apparently) also from *Discorsi*, with obvious relevance for the conservative criticism of the demagogic regime installed by the liberal government: "The demagogic is too dominated by daily and personal petty interests, it is condemned to be weak both within and outside, if by the power of inertia, of the habit maintained for hundreds of years, continues almost as by itself for a while, but there comes a day when it does not resist destruction anymore. Its improvised notabilities lack traditions, being petty, interested, ambitious, have no orientation toward the public interests, and they would even betray their homeland to foreign hands. Amongst the oligarchs there will be a traitor or two, but they will be always neutralized and crushed by their very own class that will not allow that by foreign help one of them to rise above all the others. [...] Within the demagogic states is formed, to solve these matters, a class of politicians, of patriots by trade, without past, without traditions, who transform politics into *specula* and a livelihood; within the oligarchic state there is a class of men who *ab antiquo* has the task to reconcile the forms of past with the requirements of the future, ensuring the state its continuity of development, protecting it from adventurous leaps and enterprises within and outside the system" (*op. cit.*, pp. 568-569). This opposition between the class of the demagogic politicians, on the one hand, and what Eminescu calls (by a term undertaken from Machiavelli) *oligarchy*, does not mean — Eminescu warns — a past-ridden vision, of which the poet was systematically accused by the liberal press: "This cannot be about the *remaking* of the historic oligarchy that the publication «Românul» attributes us [...] we see it very well, better than the publication «Românul» could, the impossibility of such re-establishment, and it is an act of bad-will to attribute us that we want what *we ourselves know* impossible." (*ibidem*, p. 570)

⁷ Regarding *Machiavellianism*, see also Claude Lefort, *Le travail de oeuvre Machiavel*, Gallimard, coll. Tel, Paris, 1986, pp. 73-92, *passim*. *Machiavellianism* represents, for the common spirit, a reduction of the Machiavellian political philosophy to the well-known phrase *the end justifies the means* (which, in fact, does not appear in the work of the Florentine author) and it transforms the figure of Machiavelli in the epitome of the politician deprived of moral fiber. With his caustic spirit, Caragiale summarized with local color, this comfortable political philosophy of the usual politician, associated with the term *machiaverlic*, derived from *Machiavellianism*, which is present for instance, in the discourse of the jovial character Trahanache who represents, in fact, a synthesis between the Western individualist cynicism and the meanders of the Eastern political culture, based on the transactional spirit and impenetrable to the principles of an absolute moral. It is remarkable that at his turn, Innocent Gentillet blames the author of *The Prince*, considering him an adversary to Christian moral in politics, calling Machiavelli a *Turk* and *Mohammedan*.

⁸ The short story *Kir Ianulea* is published initially in *Viața Românească*, year IV, no. 11, November 1909, pp. 208-232; and republished in the volume *Schite nouă*, 1910, included then in *Opere* (ed. Zarifopol-Cioculescu), vol. II, 1931. In a footnote to *Schite nouă*, Caragiale states: "This story is found in se Giovanni Brevio, *Rime*, Rome, 1545, as *Novella di Belfagor*; and later, in 1549, is published with the same title under the name of Machiavelli and since then it is included in complete works of the famous Florentine secretary. An English bibliographer scholar John Dunlop believes that the original of *Belfagor* was found in a Latin manuscript from the library St.-Martin de Tours, a manuscript vanished since the Civil wars. After Machiavelli, La Fontaine, the French fabulist, writes a *Belphegor*, in the collection *Contes*, published for the first time in Paris, by Denis Thierry and Claude Barbin, 1682" (see also I.L. Caragiale, *Opere I, Proză literară în volume*, second edition, Academia Română, Fundația Națională pentru știință și Artă, Bucharest, 2011, pp. 809-811).

Currently there is no widely recognized theory to explain the manner in which the influence of an author within a foreign culture manifests. This theory is yet to be developed sooner or later. In the absence of such encompassing theoretical approach, one may still say that, an author enters a foreign culture gradually. In a first stage only, his name circulates. Then, his work is translated, partially or totally. Next, the name is related to a certain idea or image: for instance, we talk about a Kafkian or Orwellian universe. Within that culture, systematic studies illustrating the ideas of that author start to appear. Eventually, the scholars investigate the influence of the author in question over these or that domestic personality (for example, D.D. Roșca remained in the French culture as the author of an important study concerning the influence of Hegel on Taine).

These are just stages, more or less obvious, which allow us assess the influence of an author within a culture. In what concerns Romanian culture, this influence of the Enlightenment authors (D. Popovici, for instance), has been studied — the influence of Schopenhauer or the influence of Kant (both with major influence on Junimea circle) etc.

The influence presupposes an unmediated relation, easily proved. Thus, we talk about the influence of Schopenhauer on Maiorescu, as the Romanian critic was not only the translator of his aphorisms, but also the creator of aesthetics inspired to a great extent by Schopenhaurian ideas.

Within the history of culture, the circulation of ideas and motifs is a more complex phenomenon, which is not reduced only to the influence of some authors over others. Sometimes, we notice mediate, indirect relations of processing and transforming certain themes or ideas, what we could call, with a more general phrase, cultural *interferences*⁹.

Returning to Machiavelli, his presence in the Romanian culture has certain interesting particularities that make us oscillate between the two terms, *influences* and *interferences*.

In the first case, it is about a direct reach that the ideas of the Florentine secretary exercise on personalities belonging to our cultural history. In the second case, the names, ideas and works of Machiavelli are rather pretexts for intellectual constructions that have less to do with the author of *The Prince*. However, Machiavelli is interesting from this point of view, because not only in the Romanian culture, but also in other cultures his name has stimulated this sort of intellectual constructions unrelated to the personality and work of the Florentine, especially in polemical contexts (see the Huguenot Innocent Gentillet in France, with his *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner* of 1576, evoking Machiavelli, as a kind of mask of the Devil, in the Elizabethan theatre¹⁰ or *Anti-Machiavel*, written

⁹ A theory of the cultural influences remains to be formulated. Within Romanian culture, E. Lovinescu attempted to propose such a theory starting from a discussion of the ideas of imitation and synchronism (interpreting the relation between major and minor cultures) in *Istoria civilizației române moderne* (1924-1925). Although, this theory triggered numerous objections, especially during interwar period, it had nevertheless the merit to express with certain clarity a series of problems to be solved.

¹⁰ In the prologue of the theatre play “*The Jew of Malta*” (performed around 1590), the character named Machevill, utters the following lines: *Albeit the world think Machevill is dead, Yet was his soul but flown beyond the Alps; / ... / To some perhaps my name is odious; / ... / ... I am Machevill, / And weigh not men, and therefore not*

by Friedrich the Great of Prussia and amended by Voltaire, who shall publish the royal opusculum in 1740).

Either when discussing the influences, or when approaching cultural interferences, the cultural and historical context plays an important role. This fact is obvious in what concerns the presence of Machiavelli in Romanian culture. In the current state of knowledge, it seems that the first reader of Machiavelli on the nowadays territory of Romania is Nicolae Mavrocordat. It is not an accident that the theoretical work of Machiavelli seems to have aroused the interest of the prince Nicolae Mavrocordat¹¹, the first Phanariot who ruled in the Romanian Principalities. Nicolae Mavrocordat, born in 1680 at Constantinople, ruled twice in Moldavia: since 1709 until 1710 (then he was replaced by Dimitrie Cantemir) and since 1711 (when Cantemir took refuge in Russia) until 1716, and also twice in the southern Walachia, in 1716 (January-November, when he was taken prisoner by the Austrian troupes winning in the war with the Ottoman Porte) and, after his release from captivity, since March 1719 until September 1730, when he died in a plague epidemics that affected Bucharest.

Indeed, from various points of view, Nicolae Mavrocordat reminds us of the characters of the Italian Renaissance. Capable of a fulminating political ascension, intelligent, ambitious, polyglot¹² (his father, Alexandru Mavrocordat *Secretarius*, was the Dragoman, that is, the official translator, but also, a sort of unofficial Foreign Minister of the Sublime Porte), Nicolae Mavrocordat is interested in the Western ideas and gathers an impressive library. As a true Renaissance man, the Phanariot prince left literary and hortatory writings, and political reflections, showing a complex personality¹³, which, under certain aspects, suffers the comparison with the more famous Dimitrie Cantemir. Like him, Nicolae Mavrocordat has, since

men's words./Admire'd I am of those that hate me most" etc. (Christofer Marlowe, *The Complete Plays*, ed. by J.B. Steane, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, p. 347. Regarding this subject, see also J. Warshaw, "Machiavelli in Marlowe", in *Sewanee Review*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1916, pp. 425-439). Certainly, the presence of Machiavelli in the English culture is wider. J.G.A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner, both belonging to the so-called School from Cambridge, publishes relevant works on this topic that became classical (J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton: 1975; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume I: The Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, 1978).

¹¹ This aspect was emphasized since 1923, by Em. Grigoraș, in an article published in the magazine *Adevărul literar și artistic*, issued 25 May 1923, with the title "Machiavelli și Mavrocordat", starting from the notes (in Italian, Greek and Latin) found in the volumes of Machiavellian *Works* that supposedly belonged to the Phanariot ruler. More recently, Raisa Radu has published several articles on this topic (see Raisa Radu, *Nicolae Mavrocordat's notes to Niccolo (sic!) Machiavelli*, in vol. *Lucrările simpozionului internațional Cartea. România. Europa, Bucharest 20-24 September 2009*, Biblioteca Bucureștilor Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010. These notes unfortunately were not yet published in a scientific edition and for this reason researchers have to base their conclusions on the account of Grigoraș, undertaken by Raisa Radu, without the possibility of independent verification.

¹² Nicolae Mavrocordat knew Greek, Latin, Arab, Italian, French, Turkish and Persian languages.

¹³ Unfortunately, these writings do not appear to have truly awakened an interest in the trade of Romanian translators and editors (with very few exceptions, one of these being the apparition in 1890 at the Scientific and Literary Archive — Arhiva științifică și literară —, in Iași, of the work entitled *The Guidance of Prince Neculai Mavrocordat to His Son Constantin — Sfătuirile domnului Neculai Mavrocordat către fiul său Constantin*), which were, nevertheless, published in Venice, Vienna, Leipzig, Paris and Montréal. For a more complete list of these editions (up to 2011), see Tudor Dinu, *Dimitrie Cantemir și Nicolae Mavrocordat. Rivalități politice și literare la începutul secolului XVIII*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2011, pp. 443-444. Amongst these writings of Mavrocordat, more often, are mentioned *Peri ton kathekonton biblos* (*On Duties*, Bucharest, 1719) (maybe suggested by the sort of homonym writing, *De officiis*, of Cicero) and the novel *Philotheou Parerga* (*The Leisure Times of Philotheos*), Vienna, 1800, considered sometimes the first novel written in neo-Greek.

his teenage period, the ambition to produce philosophical writings, and aged seventeen, composes a dialogue entitled *Despre viață și moarte* (*About Life and Death*) that, after Alkis Angelou, is stylistically situated under the influence of Lucian from Samosata, and ideologically he undertakes some of the points of view expressed in the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Axiochos*¹⁴. Under the same influence of the satiric Lucian, he will compose other dialogues: *Despre cei trei oboli* (*About the Three Oboes*) *Falsul filosof sau Tăicuțu* (*The False Philosopher or the Father*), *Zeflemisitorul sau Jucătorul de zaruri* (*The Mockers or The Player of Dice*)¹⁵.

The Phanariot Prince, though, had, culturally speaking, a rather unfortunate destiny, to which contributed as well the historical circumstances, as the Romanian historiography of the 19th century. The latter created an image entirely unfavourable, both to the epoch of Phanariots and, in general, out of the desire to bring Romania closer to the European West, to the relations between Romanians and the suzerain power from Istanbul. This image was corrected much later and, maybe, yet insufficiently, because, by the mediation of these relationships, the Romanians could have beneficially be part of a complex cultural phenomenon, which was inspired called by Iorga in French *Byzance après Byzance*, considering that Byzantium not only survives to the collapse of the imperial power, but also it is extending its cultural influence — the irony of history — due precisely to Byzantium's conqueror, in a much wider geographical area.

During the epoch of the pro-Western and Romantic historiography, the Phanariot epoch was reduced to economic exactions (whose image was transmitted to us, for instance, through the Romanian novel *Ciocoii vechi și noi*, 1862 — *The Old and the New Upstarts* — written by Nicolae Filimon) and to the destruction of the traditional Romanian society. Political press of various types repeatedly reminded this aspect, and Mihai Eminescu's political writings make no exception. For Eminescu, Eugeniu Carada and some of his liberal colleagues are considered the last Phanariot representatives. The voice of someone like Pompiliu Eliade, who emphasized the positive aspects of the Phanariot century in the Romanian Principalities, at least in what concerns the cultural aspect, has remained singular for a long while. Within this context, naturally, the figure of Nicolae Mavrocordat could not make any exception from the general tendency to denigrate the Phanariot contribution to the history of the Romanian culture. Although reminded in the important syntheses consecrated to the 18th century, the writings of Nicolae Mavrocordat remained almost entirely not translated in Romania and thus, quasi-inaccessible to the public and even to numerous researchers.

Nicolae Mavrocordat was, like his father, an erudite interested in the Western publications, as well as the owner of a maybe unparalleled library in Eastern Europe. Toward the end of his life, an edition of Machiavelli's *Works* was issued, in Italy (and in Italian language), which Mavrocordat procured for himself in 1726 and which seemed to arouse his special interest. Testimony bears a series of annotations — some written, seemly, by the very hand of the Phanariot Prince, and other own, presumably, to one of his secretaries. According to the investigation of Raisa Radu:

¹⁴ Apud Tudor Dinu, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

“Analyzing the writing and the Princely *ex-libris*, Em. Grigoraș arrives to the conclusion that volumes I (containing the first five books of the book, entitled *Istorie fiorentine* — *Florentine Histories* — and III (including *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* — *Discourses on Livy*) were annotated by the prince himself, while the second volume (containing *Il Principe*, *La vita di Castruccio Castracani*, writings of Machiavelli concerning France and Germany) seems to be annotated by someone else, with a smaller writing”¹⁶.

Maybe that person wrote at the indication of Mavrocordat, though, and the notes could be in fact transcriptions of live, dictated reflections of the Prince. Chapter 9 of the Machiavellian *The Prince* (entitled “*De principatu civile*”) was especially annotated, enjoying much attention.

However, the Machiavellian text seems to analyze a similar political situation to that of Nicolae Mavrocordat. After Machiavelli, power has to be won, in the civil principality, and not through violence, or excessive cruelty (*sceleratezza*), but through what the Florentine calls *astuzia fortunata* (that is, through a combination of intelligence and fortune), permitting to attain the favours of the people or the favours of the powerful of the day¹⁷ (of local aristocracy). The one who becomes a Prince with the help of the important ones, adds Machiavelli, has to pay attention to the intentions of the latter, because the aristocrats have the tendency to see themselves the equals of the Prince, which may lead to the undermining of his power¹⁸. It is the case of Nicolae Mavrocordat, of whom we know that he was in a conflict relation with his boyars (aristocracy). Anyhow, Machiavelli advises (in the chapter mentioned) the Prince to trust rather his people and not the aristocracy, since the people is not adamant to oppress, but just to not be oppressed, being thus situated on a defensive line, unlike the aristocrats, whose intention is to oppress the others¹⁹.

As noticed, in *The Prince* Machiavelli suggests the leader (the Prince) to find a just equilibrium in relation to various social categories (the Florentine, following Tit Livius, refers to the aristocracy (the *grandi*, *magnati*) and to the *populus*, the Roman plebe). Obviously, Romanian society from the epoch of Mavrocordat was structured in a specific manner, where there was no *populus* that could play, as in Florence during Machiavelli’s times, an active²⁰ political role, as the Advising Assembly of the Great Boyars was not an exact equivalent, neither for the Roman Senate, nor for the Great Florentine Council. Yet, Mavrocordat understands the preoccupation to save certain equilibrium; a proof for this aspect is his politics from the beginning of his rule, based on certain privileges, granted with prudence, though, to the great boyars, but also a specific ease of the burden of taxes for the

¹⁶ Raisa Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

¹⁷ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, cap. 9.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ “Ma di Firenze in prima si dividono infra loro i nobili, di poi i nobili e il popolo, e in ultimo il popolo e la plebe; e molte volte occorse che una di queste parti rimasa superiore, si divise in due: dalle quali divisioni ne nacquero tante morti, tanti esili, tante distruzioni di famiglie, quante mai ne nascessero in alcuna città della quale si abbia memoria” (Niccolò Machiavelli, *Istorie fiorentine*, *Proemio*, in vol. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere storiche*, a cura di Alessandro Monteverocchi e Carlo Varotti, Edizione nazionale delle opere II, Salerno editrice, Roma, 2010, vol. I, p. 91).

peasants. Thus, during his first years of rule, Nicolae Mavrocordat reduces some taxes to their half (*vădrăritul*) and he eliminated other taxes entirely (*pogonăritul*). However, the pressure of the Ottoman system, where a vassal Prince could not maintain power unless corrupting the higher ranks of the Ottoman Port, next to the permanent tendency toward mutiny of the grand boyars (who aspired, most of them, to replace the Prince, through the very same system of corruption of the clerks responsible with these high positions from Constantinople). This makes it so that, in time, Nicolae Mavrocordat gave up this politics of his first years of rule. As a consequence, the taxes grew constantly and his conflicts with the boyars became a permanence of the last years of reign.

Mavrocordat is, nevertheless, far from being a declared disciple of Machiavelli. The Phanariot Prince proves to be, in his notes, stunned by the cynicism of certain pages of *Discorsi* ... and he mentions, after concluding the reading: "I have finished reading closely the famous discourses of Machiavelli, an author truly condemnable, with thoughts that are not suitable for a statesman, a veritable Godless miserly being; but many things that he says are worth taking into consideration"²¹.

The true importance of the annotations of Nicolae Mavrocordat is in fact that they highlight the circulation, albeit limited of a sum of Western philosophical and political ideas on the territory of the Romanian Principalities. Surprisingly, maybe, for a lot of people, Nicolae Mavrocordat quotes²², in his annotations to Machiavelli's works, opinions from authors such as Francis Bacon, Daniel Georg Morhof²³, Scipione Ammirato²⁴, Trajano Boccalini²⁵, proving that, at the beginning of the 18th century, a Prince of the Romanian Principalities could be a true European.

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²¹ Em. Grigoraș, *loc. cit.*, apud Raisa Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

²² Cf. Raisa Radu, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

²³ Daniel Georg Morhof (1639-1691), German literate and polyhistor.

²⁴ Scipione Ammirato (1531-1601), Florentine, author of *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* (1594).

²⁵ Raisa Radu, *op. cit.* especially the reference to Boccalini can occasion ampler commentaries. Trajano Boccalini (1556-1613), contemporary with the well Giovanni Botero, is interesting because, in the midst of the counter reform, attempts a rehabilitation of Machiavelli through a republican lecture of *The Prince*, in the spirit of what Giuseppe Toffanin called "il tacitismo rosso". See also Giuseppe Toffanin, *Machiavelli e il tacitismo (la "politica storica" al tempo della Controriforma)*, Angelo Draghi, Padova, 1921, Reprint from the collection of the University of California Libraries, p. 192 *sqq.*, *passim*). His radicalism apparently brought his death (according to some rumors, he was assassinated at the order of Spain). On Boccalini, see also Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism. The Doctrine of Reason d'État and Its Place in Modern History*, translated from the German by Douglas Scott (...), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962, p. 71 *sq.*