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**The Influence of Machiavellian Beliefs on England's Golden Age  
Under the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603)**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
of Master in Literature and Civilization

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## **Dedications**

This work is dedicated to my beloved mother, sister and true friends.

Sid Ahmed

This work is dedicated to my family.

Amin

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to analyze and investigate the impact of Machiavelli's teachings on new rulers in general and on Queen Elizabeth I in particular. The study attempts to answer the following questions: Was Queen Elizabeth I a Machiavellian ruler? Is there any Machiavellian political theories and teachings that were applied by the Queen? Did the Queen read/own a copy of any of Machiavelli's books? In this study, an analytical-qualitative approach is adopted by the analysis of the collected data. The main results proved that Elizabeth's I reign was in fact highly influenced by Niccolo Machiavelli's political thoughts. In addition, that Queen Elizabeth I was indeed a true Machiavellian ruler.

**Keywords:** Politics, England, Machiavelli, Elizabeth, Machiavellian theories, Machiavellian teachings.

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## General Introduction

Within political discourse during the late Tudor period, a new notion of statecraft as an activity independent from religious concerns arose. The English Reformation was a key driver of this evolution, since after cutting links with the Roman Catholic Church, the English State was obliged to redefine and justify its use of authority in respect to God and the political scene. The response of the English monarchy to this threat was informed by cultural events on the continent, particularly the transmission of Niccolo Machiavelli's famous book on politics and power, *Il Principe (The Prince)*. Machiavelli attempted to offer more realistic guidance to rulers than previous humanists by explaining matters as they were in reality instead of how they were envisioned.

While other Englishmen were appalled by his condescending attitude towards statecraft, others attempted to apply his counsel to English circumstances. In any case, Machiavelli's ideas had a significant impact on how people understood and practiced politics throughout the years of Tudor era.

Historians such as Lisa Hilton claimed that Elizabeth I (1558-1603) followed a 'Machiavellian' rule pattern, despite no one really investigated the historical ramifications of such a claim. Others believed that even if Elizabeth I did not take her values and manners of ruling directly from Machiavelli, she was most likely exposed to his ideas through her Machiavellian advisors.

In an article in *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, Walter Alison Phillips claims that Elizabeth was a student of Machiavelli for two reasons: first, there is a theatrical component to both her private and public life that suggests that she was playing a meticulously prepared

role; second, she adopted the Machiavellian concept of people consolidation, by uniting them in national conflict with a rival force; finally, he suggests that the Queen's conversion of England from Catholicism to Protestantism was accomplished. In addition, the Queen preserved the shadows of old institutions while introducing new ones. (Skeleton)

It is believed that Elizabeth I was fundamentally a Machiavellian in foreign policy. However, there is limited evidence to suggest that she drew her statecraft dogmas from *The Prince*. The primary objective of her diplomacy, which she never consciously strayed from, was to create and preserve her reign and kingdom in an impregnable position of security and strength. To that goal, she was willing to utilize any weapon that seemed to be useful, while evading any commitments that would imperil her own freedom of action or diminish the strength she held as a ruler of an insular state.

Apathetic about the rights or feelings of others as long as her own ends were fulfilled, she was highly egotistical, aggressive, greedy, and incredibly self-centered. Yet, she was resolute in her quest of her aims, good and evil. These were the characteristics that allowed Elizabeth to prevail and the English to rise from the ashes of lesser, more conscientious people. This portrays Queen Elizabeth as a Machiavellian ruler, yet it seems that the approach that worked was the one she employed regardless of the origin of the beliefs. It is indeed hard to claim Elizabeth is a real Machiavellian. This research is an attempt to highlight the resemblance between the two views of Elizabeth I and Machiavelli and to demonstrate that Elizabeth acted in ways that Machiavelli would have undoubtedly approved of on several occasions.

This research aims to investigate whether Queen Elizabeth's reign and political actions were influenced by Machiavelli's thoughts and beliefs. The research also aims to compare

between Queen Elizabeth's system of government and Niccolo Machiavelli's theories, thoughts, beliefs and doctrines. Furthermore, this work is an attempt to note the similarities of the two points of view. Four main questions are to be asked and answered during this research.

- Was Queen Elizabeth I a Machiavellian ruler?
- Is there any Machiavellian political theories or teachings that were used by the Queen?
- Did the Queen read/ owned a copy of any of Machiavelli's books?
- Was the Queen exposed to the works of Machiavelli?

A historical descriptive-analytical approach is adopted to carry out the current study, using data from books, articles, and websites.

This research is different from other studies as it examines the link between Elizabeth I and Niccolo Machiavelli. Although the two historical figures never met each other, the Queen's reign seems to be highly influenced by Machiavelli's political thoughts.

To achieve the objective of this research, this study is divided into three chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the Renaissance in general and Renaissance England in particular as this crucial period in European history was the epoch when England was emerging as a major European power. Chapter two examines Machiavelli's books, particularly *The prince*, *Discourse on Levy*, and *the Art of War*. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates how Machiavelli's books influenced Elizabeth's actions. Chapter three is devoted to the similarities between Machiavelli's and Queen Elizabeth's views, behaviours, and thoughts.

# Chapter I

## An Overview of the Renaissance

### Introduction

This chapter will explore the Renaissance. It will also reveal the main causes that underlined the Renaissance as a cultural and intellectual movement. Additionally this chapter will foreground the prominent thinkers who contributed actively to the emergence of the Renaissance.

### 1. What is the Renaissance?

The Renaissance, was a period of time from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, where Europe witnessed a great growth in arts, politics, economy, philosophy, architecture, literature, mathematics and science. It had been preceded by the middle Ages. As a result, the renaissance is considered as the bridge between the middle ages and the modern ages.

Bergin in his book *‘Encyclopedia of the Renaissance and the Reformation’* defined ‘The Renaissance as a vast cultural movement spanning some three centuries of European history, is so rich, so many-faceted, and so impressive in its achievements that it defies easy measurement or even accurate definition.’ (page X)

While it is said that the Renaissance originally began in the fourteenth century in Italy, the major ideas and beliefs of the movement dispersed throughout all of Europe by the

sixteenth century. It is crucial to mention that the Renaissance contributed to the discovery of America and the Indies, the invention of printing, the Protestant Reformation, and the unrivalled achievements of Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio in the fields of arts and letters. Their genius later appeared in Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Cervantes, invigorating the arts throughout Europe. To elaborate on the ideas presented in the preceding paragraphs, let's walk through some of the important reasons that helped in the emergence of the Renaissance.

## **2. What Caused the Advent of the Renaissance?**

### **2.1 The Interactions between Different Cultures**

Historians see the key reasons behind the emergence of the Renaissance are the interactions between different cultures and societies. In the process of these interactions, one consequence was the occurrence of exchange of values and beliefs. This is significant since Europe was in the midst of the middle ages at the time. The middle ages (or Medieval Period) were notable for having political, religious and economic unrest. These characteristics (together with others) contributed to the formation of a society that was extremely conservative socially, religiously, and politically. This implies that European society was not always amenable to change. However, the heart of the Renaissance was a revolution in Europe's outlook and viewpoint. This transformation was triggered by new ideas, perspectives, and beliefs that Europe adopted. Furthermore, another key reason is trade networks.

## 2.2. Trade Networks

Enormous trade networks throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa promoted interaction between diverse cultures, resulting in a flow of people, beliefs, ideas, and values. The biggest and utmost famous of these commercial networks was the Silk Road. It was the development of one of the first and greatest trading networks in human history, and it was essential to many different civilizations across Eurasia from around 120 BCE to 1450 CE. At its peak, the Silk Road extended over 4000 miles from Japan and China in the east to the Mediterranean region, including Italy, in the west. It passed through several various locations along the journey, including India, Persia, the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe.

There existed numerous diverse civilizations that partook in the Silk Road's long existence. Undoubtedly, Mongol and Chinese merchants were crucial to the Silk Road, since many of their commodities were in high demand in other foreign countries such as Europe. Consequently, European traders frequently voyaged to the Arabian Peninsula to obtain scarce and valuable goods from the Far East. The traders of the Middle Eastern civilization, for their part, were mainly middlemen who exchanged products from both sides. Although the Silk Road is most commonly associated with the trade of food and commodities, it is worth noting that the Silk Road featured the exchange of values, beliefs and thoughts. Throughout that era, Middle Eastern civilization developed into prominent centers of education and science as stated previously. For instance, Middle Eastern mathematicians refined and improved mathematics using information from other countries such as India, including techniques that are still utilized today.

Additionally, philosophical and religious values outspread readily throughout the routes and had a tremendous effect on the Renaissance. For example, after emerging in the

seventh century from the Arabian Peninsula, the Islamic faith swiftly diffused all across the Middle East, Africa, and even into some regions of Europe as traders took their faith with them on the Silk Road. This stream of uncommon ideologies influenced painters, authors, philosophers, and others across Europe. In addition to the previous causes, another crucial cause is the Crusades.

### **2.3. The Crusades**

The crusades were the second major interaction between the East and the West which exerted a far-reaching effect on the Renaissance. An endless cycle of religious warfare fought by Christian crusaders from Europe throughout the medieval times. In 1095 CE, European lords and crusaders sailed towards the Middle East trying to seize the Holy Land from the Muslim rulers who had ruled the region for ages. In actuality, there were several crusades. Historians disagree on the actual number, but there were nine major crusades and several minor ones over the span of two centuries. Those religious wars were an important event in the Middle Ages. One of the first significant implications of the crusades, for instance, was the promotion of interaction between different cultures, civilizations and groups of people. For example, the crusades caused the clash between Christianity, and Islam.

‘The crusades encouraged voyages and a study of geography. The Europeans sailed on long voyages. The crusaders met strange people and got new ideas from them. The intellectual horizon of the crusaders had broadened very much when they came back and felt disgusted with their dull life.’ (Scientist, sec.4 line 6)

The exchange of ideas among the many religious groups is what resulted in this conflict of religious ideals, permitting the principles of each religious faith to extend into new

places. The rivalry between these religions has remained until today. Aside from religion, interaction between diverse groups of people resulted in the dissemination of philosophical and scientific knowledge. The Silk Road already resulted in a tremendous dissemination of ideologies, thoughts and beliefs throughout Eurasia, but the Crusades reinforced and deepened the tradition. The Middle East was a thriving center of education and science in the advent of the Crusades in the eleventh century. The Middle Eastern civilizations profited enormously from having the access to both Asian and European knowledge due to their geographical position at the crossroads of the Silk Road. In addition, the Western and Eastern societies engaged in the Crusades were introduced to each other's cultures. This meant that both sides gained cultural ideas. Next is the revival of ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts.

#### **2.4. The Rediscovery of Ancient Greek and Latin Texts**

The rediscovery of old Greek and Roman studies and literature by European philosophers was the subsequent major cause of the Renaissance. In French, for example, the word "renaissance" translates to "rebirth" This is in reference to the idea that the Renaissance intellectual culture was triggered by these ancient works.

‘The Renaissance seemed to mark the rediscovery by Western Europeans of the lost cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. Both to scholars and to educated readers who viewed human history from the perspective of the 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Renaissance marked the decisive moment when “progress” toward a better state of the world—toward modernity— began, starting in Italy and eventually spreading across the Alps.’ (Nauert XXI)

Petrarch is recognized for rediscovering the writings of Roman philosopher Cicero. Much of these ancient manuscripts were maintained in the Middle East by Islamic and Jewish

societies. Petrarch's rediscovery of Cicero's writings is regarded as the spark that ignited the Italian Renaissance. Renaissance Humanism was the analysis and study of ancient manuscripts in order to promote new social norms and principles. Petrarch utilized old literature to promote a logic-based worldview. Renaissance humanists advocated for individuals to be educated in humanities so that they might participate in their society's social and political life.

## **2.5. Inventions**

The different inventions of the time in Europe were the following key cause of the Renaissance, particularly in printing and art. In terms of publication, the printing press was one of the significant developments in history. Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press had an immediate and significant influence on the events of the Renaissance. Gutenberg created a hand mold that allowed for exact movable type. The printing process was accelerated and made quite affordable, resulting in an outburst in book publishing and printing.

‘At the beginning of the Modern era Printing Press and paper were invented. It made the books cheap in Europe. After the invention of the Printing Press, the Bible and some other books of ancient Greek and Roman literature was translated into English, French and German languages, so the people could be able to go through the Bible and the works of Plato and Aristotle.’ (Scientist, sec.6 line 1)

The Gutenberg Bible was the very first book to be mass-produced at the Gutenberg printing press. The discovery of the printing press enabled new ideas to be outspread,

enhancing the Renaissance. This threatened the dominance of the church and the nobility since they were the only source of information to their societies.

In addition, the creation of the printing press would have a significant influence on religious views throughout Europe. *'During the Medieval period, education was confined only to the priests, hence the people used to accept whatever was uttered by the priests without any hitch.'* (Scientist, sec.6 line 6) Because more and more people could read, they no longer had to rely solely on local priests and the Roman Catholic Church for Bible interpretation. Many individuals, in fact, started reading and interpreting the Bible for themselves. This eventually paved the way for the Protestant Reformation, which drastically transformed religious life in Europe. Another thing that helped transforming Europe is art.

## **2.6. Art**

The creative forms and techniques utilized by Renaissance painters were another important advance that led to the Renaissance. The Renaissance is likely best recognized today for its famous painters and exquisite paintings. Prior to the Renaissance, art depicted individuals and the world in a more unrealistic manner. This was most likely owing to the impact of humanism, which triggered the Renaissance. Just as intellectuals like Petrarch were affected by previous Roman and Greek artists, so were the Renaissance artists.

'Whatever may have been its genesis, the contributions of this dynamic age are manifold and spectacular. It was a period of exploration, inquiry, renovation, and renewal, characterized by a unique vitality. It is to the Renaissance that we owe the discovery of America and the Indies, the invention of printing, the Protestant Reformation, and in the field of arts and letters the unrivaled achievements of Michelangelo, Leonardo, Dante, Petrarch,

and Boccaccio; overflowing the boundaries of its Italian birthplace, its genius later appeared in Montaigne, Shakespeare, and Cervantes, to invigorate the arts throughout Europe.' (Speake and Bergin X)

Painting has been admired throughout history for its use of shading and blending to accentuate the realistic character of the painting. Renaissance painters introduced new skills and techniques like linear perspective, which allowed them to depict people and the world in new ways. This is most likely best demonstrated in Leonardo da Vinci's iconic 'Mona Lisa'. Another vital reason that is worth mentioning is the Black Death.

## **2.7. The Plague**

The effect of the Black Death was the ultimate cause of the Renaissance. The Black Death is one of the most significant and important events in Western history, as well as the most well-known pandemic in human history. The Plague or Black Death devastated human populations all across Asia and Europe. The 'Great Mortality' or 'Great Pestilence' was also different terms used to refer to the plague. Some estimates suggest that between 75 and 200 million people died in Europe and Asia.

The epidemic had equally terrible consequences throughout the Middle East and Asia, with similarly high death counts. While the Black Death was a dreadful event that resulted in widespread death, there was some notable advancement during the Late Middle Ages and right before the beginning of the Renaissance. Because it drove individuals to question their own religious beliefs, the Black Death was a significant cause of the Renaissance. This was due to the fact that there were no apparent reasons for the disease's widespread at the time, and no one knew how to put an end to it. *'Something so horrible clearly seemed to be a*

*judgment of God, and people sought through prayers and processions the safety they could not find through medicine.'* (Nauert 77).

The Plague's high death rate prompted dramatic change in Europe's population and economy. As a result, some individuals started to doubt the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Historians have pointed out multiple reasons of the Renaissance in Europe, including increasing cultural interaction, the rediscovery of old Greek and Roman writings, the birth of humanism, various creative, technical and artistic advancements, and the effects of conflicts and death. As a result, the Plague and its aftermaths might be seen as one of the vital causes of the Italian Renaissance. Moving on to humans rather than things who had a hand in the awakening of the Renaissance.

### **3. Famous Figures of the Renaissance**

The greatest period in human history is the Renaissance, a time when great minds and artists flourished and the world was transformed. The most famous figures that contributed to the Renaissance were da Vinci, Machiavelli, and Galileo. Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci and Lorenzo de' Medici were all born in Italy during the Renaissance. All three would go on to write books that changed the world. Most notably, Machiavelli wrote *'the Prince'*, which is about how to succeed in the world even if you are a lowly social class. Some other worth mentioning figures are:

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Michelangelo (1475–1564), Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), Raphael (1483-1520), Galileo (1564–1642), Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), and William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

## **4. The Renaissance in Europe**

### **4.1. Germany**

In other parts of Europe, the German Renaissance, which was a subset of the Northern Renaissance, was a cultural and artistic movement that flourished among German philosophers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, following the Italian Renaissance.

The introduction of Renaissance humanism to the numerous German territories affected many domains of the arts and sciences. According to (MacCulloch 76) ‘humanism can seem a difficult phenomenon to pin down and define, not least because no one used the word in the first age of humanism. Early nineteenth-century historians newly coined it from words which had indeed been in use in the late fifteenth century.’ ‘German Renaissance’ refers to the art, particularly architecture, established in the region around the River Weser and nearby parts of Germany between 1520 and 1620. Germany gave birth to two inventions that would dominate the sixteenth century throughout Europe: the printing press and Protestant Reformation.

#### **4.1.1. Religion**

The German Protestant Reformation started on October 31, 1517, at Wittenberg, Germany. Martin Luther published his Disputation on the Power of Indulgences, or 95 Theses. The book was a collection of 95 thoughts on Christianity that he encouraged others to examine with him. In the Reformation, Martin Luther argued that salvation is a divine gift to those who have faith and that the Church's role as a mediator between man and God should be abolished. These thoughts were divisive because they openly and explicitly threatened the

teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. The indulgence matter infuriated him and it was tremendously criticized by him, as shown below in a letter that he sent to the Archbishop of Mainz in 1517:

‘Papal indulgences for the building of St Peter’s are circulating under your most distinguished name . . . I grieve over the wholly false impressions which the people have conceived from them; to wit – the unhappy souls believe that if they have purchased letters of indulgence they are sure of their salvation.’ (Tuten)

Most of the challenges to the Catholic Church focused on the idea that individual Christians should be less reliant on the church for spiritual guidance and redemption. In France, John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli introduced new views regarding the tradition of the Holy Communion; in Switzerland, the Anabaptists opposed the concept that children should be baptized.

## **4.2. Politics in England**

The English Renaissance was a period of literary rebirth and poetic growth that occurred in the late fifteenth century. It is believed that it is regarded as an early peak of literary advancements, as well as the beginning of the contemporary sense of English poetry. The English Renaissance lasted until the revolutionary years of the seventeenth century. The English Renaissance is thought to have begun with the rise of the House of Tudor in 1485. It achieved its cultural apex under the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603). The period stretches as far back as King James I (1600–25) and Charles I (1625–49).

‘The English Renaissance is different from the Italian Renaissance in several ways. The dominant art forms of the English Renaissance were literature and music. Visual arts in the English Renaissance were much less significant than in the Italian Renaissance. The English period began far later than the Italian, which is usually considered to begin in the late 14th century, and was moving into Mannerism and the Baroque by the 1550s or earlier. In contrast, the English Renaissance can only be said to begin, shakily, in the 1520s, and continued until perhaps 1620.’ (“The English Renaissance”)

The age was rife with political tensions and, inextricably linked to politics, theological contradictions between Catholics and Protestants. Puritan factions sought to purify or adjust the Church of England by eradicating any Catholic or "papal" customs. The English Renaissance, which lasted barely a century or two yet brought about dramatic change, significantly altered what it meant to be an Englishman, both at home and overseas. As literacy spread, so did printing. The English language came to worldwide prominence. A uniquely English literature started to emerge, woven from several cultural threads. Medieval plays, songs, ballads as well as middle English poetry; translations from classical and current European literary works. England rose as an invincible economic and military force as a country and a newborn empire, dispatching explorers, tradesmen and colonists far beyond to Africa, Asia, and the New World.

#### **4.2.1. The Protestant Reformation**

The Reformation refers to a sixteenth century set of religious reforms movement that took place in Europe. In several parts of Europe, there was widespread opposition to the Christian Church, which eventually led to the formation of the Protestant Christian faith. This massive religious movement not only signaled a significant religious shift, but also heralded

the commencement of a new age. The Reformation began in Germany and stretched throughout Europe.

Because the Pope refused to offer Henry VIII an annulment for his marriage, Protestant reformation in England commenced in 1534. After the Tudor king ignored the Papal authority, instead establishing and claiming absolute control of the Church of England, according to Brigden ‘... *it pleased Henry to present his church as balanced between Catholic tradition and evangelical innovation*’ (121). A form of hybrid church that included both of some Catholic practices and some Protestant values. Over the following 20 years, religious strife raged in England as Queen Mary I also best known as "Bloody Mary" (1553–1558) restored Catholicism and papal authority while condemning, imprisoning, executing and exiling Protestants,

Pope Paul IV’s loathing of all things Habsburg or Spanish proved to be a wretched complication in what appeared in the 1550s to be the most promising gain for Catholic revival in all Europe: the joint reign of Queen Mary Tudor and Philip of Spain in the kingdom of England. While Habsburg hopes for a restored uniformity were crumbling in central Europe, and just as assertive Protestantism was beginning to emerge in France and the Netherlands, the sudden death of young King Edward VI in 1553 opened up the prospect of a recovered Catholic Kingdom in the Atlantic Isles. (MacCulloch 280)

Only to have her half-sister Queen Elizabeth I and her Parliament reinstating Protestantism back to the realm during her reign (1558–1603). Some English individuals thought Queen Elizabeth's attempts to reintroduce Protestantism to England were insufficient. These individuals were divided into two factions, both of which were called Puritans by their adversaries. Separatists was the name that was given to the first faction, they thought that the

Church of England was so corrupted that their only option was to flee England, break from the church, and establish a new church. “The Separatist movement was initially illegal in England, and many of its adherents were persecuted by the state and its church. Often labeled as traitors, many Separatists fled England for more tolerant lands. One such group left England for Holland in 1608.” (History.com Editors, “The Puritans”)

Around 1607 or 1609, several separatists attempted to begin their new lives in the Netherlands. Because of poverty and a fear that the children were becoming too assimilated into Dutch culture, their attempt failed. Almost all of those separatists sailed back to England. The English Separatist Church were all set for a second attempt to start a new life by 1620. Nonseparatists were the second group of English individuals who did not feel Queen Elizabeth's reform attempts were sufficient; with time, the name "Puritan" became associated with the Nonseparatists. According to (History.com Editors, “The Puritans”) ‘*They believed the Church of England was too similar to the Roman Catholic Church and should eliminate ceremonies and practices not rooted in the Bible.*’ their wishes weren't to abandon the Anglican church of England; but rather intended to change it by eradicating the last vestiges of Catholicism. In regards of theology, almost all of them were Calvinists. Even though the Puritans had no intentions of fully breaking away from the Anglican Church of England, other Puritans considered emigration to New England as their solution for actual church reformation and liberty to worship as they saw fit. ‘*Certain groups of Puritans migrated to Northern English colonies in the New World in the 1620s and 1630s, laying the foundation for the religious, intellectual and social order of New England.*’ (History.com Editors, “The Puritans”)

The first Puritans arrived in the New World around 1630, a decade after the Pilgrims departed on a similar voyage for a similar cause, and formed the Massachusetts Bay Colony

in Boston, Massachusetts. Whilst separatists and nonseparatists differed over whether to fully break away from the English Anglican Church, both factions of early North American colonists shared a discontent with the church and the belief that they were free to form a church more compatible with their religious convictions. Naturally, the freedom to practice religion according to one's convictions resulted in the establishment of a variety of diverse churches, sects, and doctrines in the colonies. This diversity has, predictably, led to tensions throughout history.

However, the variety of religious beliefs has become an important aspect of the American identity: the Bill of Rights expressly prohibits the "establishment of religion, or forbidding the free practice thereof." This idea in personal strength and freedom in religious affairs, which has its roots from the Protestant Reformation, has become a permanent component of the American ethos after 400 years in the making.

## **5. The Protestant Reformation and Literature**

The Protestant Reformation marked the beginning of the English literature tradition. William Tyndale's work inspired the King James Version of the Bible. During Elizabeth I's adolescent years, Ascham tutored her and she penned poems like 'On Monsieur's Departure'.

A newfound focus on humanism and individualism (which in brief was an intellectual movement that praised humanity's progress, based on a revived interest in the classical Roman and Greek worlds), emerged with the Renaissance. Writers began to satirize institutions such as that of the Churches, an example of that, François Rabelais, a French Renaissance playwright, monk, Greek scholar, physician and a Renaissance humanist: '... Rabelais uses the adventures of his giants to satirize and parody everything from the church to the new

humanist learning.’ (Brotton 120). Their works grew more secular, resulting in the resurrection of three genres in the English literature which are poetry, prose and drama. ‘Poetry enjoyed its hey-day during the Elizabethan age. The whole of the age lived in a state of poetic fervor. Songs, lyrics & sonnets were produced in plenty, & England became the nest of the singing birds. In versification, there was a marked improvement. Melody & pictorialism were introduced in poetry by Spenser.’(Athar)

## **6. The Birth of the Modern State**

In the European system of interactions during the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the modern state is the new type of domestic and international political structure. Its roots may be found in the crises of the medieval order and in the separation of sovereignty from its initial territorial and popular foundations. While the Westphalian settlement of 1648 marked the political formalization of the modern state system, which gave rise to the notion of sovereignty, it was really the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance that saw the word "state" acquire a connotation similar to the contemporary one. Around this time, questions concerning the state as a distinct entity, as well as its function and authority, started to permeate political discourse. The term "stato" has a variety of interpretations, and a historical review reveals the challenging process it underwent from antiquity to Machiavelli before scholars came to accept it in its contemporary form. However, Bodin and Hobbes were the key effects on the creation and growth of the modern state and the accompanying notion of sovereignty.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a general definition of the Renaissance, then it has outlined the historical background of the Renaissance throughout the history of Europe in general and in England. Furthermore, shedding the lights on what caused it as well as who are the most famous figures that helped in the emergence of the Renaissance that we all know today.

## Chapter II

### Machiavelli's Thoughts and Elizabeth's Political Decisions

#### Introduction

Machiavelli aimed to counsel and teach future rulers on how to maintain and secure their realm in his most famous work *the Prince*, and therefore his works influenced numerous monarchs. In this chapter, we will compare Machiavelli's ideas to Queen Elizabeth's conduct toward her subjects and the state to see if there are any similarities.

#### .1. Securing the State

The *raison d'état*<sup>1</sup> refers to activities and policies that promote the state's safety and security, as promoting the welfare of the population comes after ensuring the state's own survival. Over the centuries, Machiavelli had been regarded as the man responsible for the dismissal of the notion of politics as the art of republic, and the spiritual father of the doctrine of *raison d'état* (Korvela, 2006, p119). Machiavelli justified the state's (ruler) use of any measures for the sake of sustaining and preserving itself. According to him, the hard realities of political life, which he described as a battle for power and survival, dictate one's actions in politics. The state's acts must be assessed only on the basis of "*Raison d'état*," that is, an autonomous, self-sufficient, well-ordered, and well-maintained state. In order to preserve and defend this form of state, Machiavelli instructed the ruler that any methods used by the state must be justified.

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<sup>1</sup>The principle of reason of state does not differ essentially from our modern term "national security". Both imply that there are times when, for the good of the state, it is necessary to forego the normal standards of conduct.

Hilton states that according to Machiavelli, the ruler's primary duty was to preserve the state at all costs. This was one of Elizabeth I's and her ministers' primary priorities during her reign. Indeed, it might be said that it was the formation, security, and sustenance of England as a state. (2015, 15).

When Queen Elizabeth inherited the throne, she faced a major dilemma given that the crown was practically bankrupt, and absolutely with no money, due to her sister Queen Mary's debts of 300,000 pounds, for which the country had no money to pay. Besides, King Edward and King Henry VIII had all borrowed money for the sake of their lavish lifestyle and wars. Consequently, Queen Elizabeth tried to pay that debt through selling some lands, because money was power and all the money that she needed was only to remain secure. She also needed money to reward loyal subjects solely to guarantee their allegiance and alliance. The Queen avoided issuing lots of taxes because she was worried about their effect. Instead she hoarded all the money she could get by lessening the expenses of feasts, court necessities, servants and herself included to half. Additionally, she continued the selling of crown lands to pay all the remaining debt. By 1574, the crown was free of debt for the first time since 1558. Therefore, Queen Elizabeth knew how and planned to maintain order and security and these needed money. Besides money, a ruler must have a strong and powerful government to obtain order inside and outside her/his kingdom and Queen Elizabeth had an extraordinary government.

## **2. Elizabeth's Government**

Running a state is no easy task, especially for new rulers. Therefore every ruler needs a parliament, councilors, and advisers to rule and take the best decisions concerning state matters.

## 2.1 Choosing Ministers

Selecting competent ministers is critical since a ruler's choice of those around him demonstrates his intellect. If a ruler cannot have good ideas, she/he will not be able to assort his/her minister's good ideas from his/her bad ones. Machiavelli's discussion of the topic is direct, as stated in the first paragraph of chapter XXII of *the Prince*<sup>2</sup>, in which he states that:

A prince's choice of ministers is crucial; they are either excellent or bad depending on the prince's judgment. And the first supposition to be made of a lord's brain is to observe the men he has around him; and when they are capable and faithful, he can always be reputed smart since he knows how to identify them as capable and keep them as faithful (1998.92).

Machiavelli attempts to explain that a wise prince (ruler) will choose intelligent advisors. He/she should listen carefully, but at the end he makes his own decisions and sticks to them. This is exactly what Queen Elizabeth I did when she ascended the throne. She tightly controlled Parliament and her Privy Council<sup>3</sup>. When Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, many advisers of her Catholic sister, Queen Mary, were expelled from the government. So, Elizabeth's first priority was to assemble a council of trustworthy advisers. Elizabeth appointed the Privy Council, which consisted of a group of strong noblemen.

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<sup>2</sup> The first edition of *the Prince* was published by Antonio Blado in Rome in 1532. (cited from: Skinner, Quentin. *MACHIAVELLI: A Very Short Introduction*. 2019.)

<sup>3</sup> The Privy Council has its roots in the early monarchy, when it was composed of individuals chosen by the King or Queen to offer counsel on matters of state. The Privy Council was also a formal council that advised Queen Elizabeth I and acted as the nerve core of her government.

The Privy Council advised Queen Elizabeth but did not have control over her. She picked a small group of 19 men to avoid inter-group conflict (Catholic versus Protestant), but she also had to ensure that no member grew too strong or disloyal. Besides that, the Queen had three main and important advisers, William Cecil, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Robert Dudley. In addition, she demonstrated that the Queen of England was both intelligent and wise in choosing her ministers to serve her and uphold her Protestant monarchy. It is comparable to Machiavelli's advice to aspirant kings on how to choose advisors. While selecting ministers is vital, receiving advice from ministers is more crucial for new rulers.

## **2.2 Taking Counsel from Ministers**

Taking advice from ministers is very common for kings and queens. However, Machiavelli (in *the Prince*) states that a prince should constantly take counsel, but only when he wishes, not when others wish it. In fact, he should discourage everyone from counseling him about anything until he directly demands it. However, he should ask many questions and then be a patient listener to the truth about the things he questioned about. Indeed, he should become agitated if someone hesitates to tell him the truth (1998.95).

To demonstrate the first aspect of this Machiavellian concept of seeking guidance, let us consider the case of a man named Parry. This Welsh member of Parliament took it upon himself in 1585 to warn the queen about the Catholics and others plotting against her life. The man was decapitated for his misbehaviour. Although the advice was accurate, it was given without being asked (Guizot, 1878. 218). According to Machiavelli, managing a state with wise advisers and heeding their advice is insufficient, thus he counsels rulers to use deceit whenever feasible for the sake of the state.

### 3. Deceiving People

Machiavelli's perspective on human nature is critical to understand, since it explains his instructions to the ruler for governing the state. Machiavelli sees humanity as greedy and opportunistic by nature. He claims that humans tend to act in their own self-interest. His perspective on human nature is primarily negative. He states in (*The Discourses on Livy*)<sup>4</sup>: it is incredible to appear kind, faithful, compassionate, sincere, and devoted, and to be such; yet, you must have the mental tendency to be able to change to the opposing qualities when required. A ruler must not stray from what is good if at all possible, but must be inclined to evil if needed (Pruthi). Also Machiavelli, in (*the Prince*) states that: it is required to understand how to handle this nature (cunningness), as well as to be a great pretender and dissembler; and a man is so simple and subservient to present requirements that he who deceives will always find someone who will allow himself to be deceived (1998.70).

Deception was often supported in Machiavellian writings. Machiavelli mentions, that Pope Alexander VII was an example of deception, because Pope Alexander neither did anything, nor even thought of anything but how to deceive men. Since this quality is beneficial for its user, it does not matter who and how to deceive people. Elizabeth I utilized this Machiavellian quality. She was a greater deceiver and manipulator. For instance, her advisors were constantly urging her to wed and to provide an heir to the throne, preferably a male heir. Elizabeth did not take any of these suitors. These suitors wanted her and, as long as they wanted her, they would be friendly to England (Cormpton,2005.36).

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<sup>4</sup> The first edition of the *The Discourses on Livy* , published by Antonio Blado in Rome in 1531.(cited from: Skinner, Quentin. *MACHIAVELLI : A Very Short Introduction*. 2019.)

To be precise, Elizabeth neither promised to be wed, nor did she say that she would never marry. She kept her option open, so she could respond to the changing circumstances of the time. The ability to react and change was one of her greatest tactics (Cormpton, 2005 ,38).

Moreover, Elizabeth attempted to betroth her Scottish-Franco Cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, to marry one of her loyal and most trusted advisors, Lord Robert Dudley. In order to manipulate her and eliminate the possibility of her cousin and fellow Queen from marrying any other powerful monarch, which would eventually impose more threat on the English throne, Elizabeth never questioned Dudley's allegiance and loyalty. Further, she knew that a loyal subject of hers as a King Consort to her cousin would help a great deal in containing her and preserving the peace between the neighbouring realms. However, both queens were highly aware of their schemes and knew what was best for their interests.

Regardless of the fact that this proves that Elizabeth did succeed in deceiving and manipulating the suitors who proposed to her, she failed with Mary Stuart. For this reason, a ruler must use other ways to achieve his/ her needs as Machiavelli advises. In addition to being a man<sup>5</sup>, a ruler should act like a predator in order to achieve his/ her goals from Machiavelli's standpoint. Since Machiavelli advised rulers to deceive people, he also suggested mastering cruelty and compassion so that you could use them when necessary to be adored by the populace and to avoid being loathed.

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<sup>5</sup> Machiavelli meant by man "a person who uses law only to solve problems".

#### **4. Between Cruelty and Compassion**

Proceeding to other features of a ruler, Machiavelli sought to tell monarchs that the most crucial features of a ruler are compassion and cruelty.

Machiavelli states that whether it is preferable to be loved than feared, or vice versa the answer is that one would like to be both. However, because it is challenging to acquire both, it is far safer to be feared than loved if one must choose between the two. One must understand that there are two variants of combat: those involving laws and politics and those involving force. The first belongs to laymen, the second to warriors. But, because the first is frequently insufficient, one must resort to the second. As a result, a ruler must understand how to use and channel both the warrior and the layman within him (1998.69).

When it comes to Elizabeth I, she chose and was determined to rule by love rather than by fear. Later, her godson, Sir Johan Harington, remembered that she used to say that “her state did require her to command”.

Even in times of war, a queen who gave such thought to what her subjects would think of her was reluctant to stifle their loyalty by making them foot the bill for the whole government. As a result, budgetary weaknesses and financial strategies would harm the government system. Due to their laziness and negligence, Elizabeth and Cecil presided over a taxation system that began to degenerate. While government spending expanded significantly in real terms, the value of parliamentary taxes not only lagged behind inflation but also stayed constant in terms of tax assessment. Money value also decreased as a result of tax evasion (Brigden, 2000, 215).

In other words, Queen Elizabeth issued the poor laws; the poor laws<sup>6</sup>. This displays how the Queen's first interest was the comfort of her subjects regardless of what class they belonged to. Furthermore, preferring to be loved rather than feared does not deny the fact that she was an excellent Machiavellian. She was both loved and feared at the same time; Elizabeth was mostly loved by her protestant supporters. However, she was also feared, mostly by her Catholic subjects. As they never truly accepted her as the rightful monarch for the English throne. Often referred to her as a woman of a questionable birth and legitimacy that no Catholic truly wanted on the throne.

Even though the fellow Queens never met, but they loved each other and that can be proven by the letters that they used to exchange, referring to each other as sisters and family. While England witnessed a period of tranquility, however, that was not the case for the newly Protestant Scotland and Queen Mary the devout Catholic. As she was dealing with a very unsuccessful marriage to Henry Stuart, more commonly known as Lord Darnley. Who was an English nobleman that had a strong and a rightful claim to both English and Scottish thrones through his parents. This marriage strengthened Queen Mary's claim to the throne and doubled the threat on Elizabeth I.

Lord Darnley sought and had eyes on the Crown Matrimonial, which, in Scots law is a King's/Queen's consort right to co-reign equally with the regnant monarch. However Queen Mary never provided him that, instead she was content with giving him the title of King consort only. Additionally, many believe that he had excessive drinking issues and often made a mockery of himself. This behavior strangely worked on Queen Mary's favor, considering

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<sup>6</sup> In British history, a complex of rules known as "Poor Law" was created in the 16th century in England and continued, with a number of modifications, until after World War II. The Elizabethan Poor Laws, as they were codified in 1597–1598, were administered by parish overseers, who gave assistance to the elderly, sick, and baby poor as well as employment in workhouses for the physically fit.(cited from: Britannica. "*Poor Law* | *British Legislation*." Encyclopædia Britannica, 27 Sept. 2018, [www.britannica.com/event/Poor-Law](http://www.britannica.com/event/Poor-Law).)

that it was this very behavior by King Darnley that alienated many who would otherwise have been his supporters who wished the Catholic Queen to be overthrown

Months later, Darnley was found murdered and all fingers were pointed at Mary, a coup took place, Mary unharmed and successfully escaped to her fellow Queen and cousin, Elizabeth I. never meeting her and holding her as a prisoner for nineteen years. This irritated the English Catholics and led to many plots, one of which is *the Babington plot (1586)*. Successfully intercepted by Cecil and Walsingham, the plot failed and as a consequence Queen Mary Stuart was committed of treason and was sentenced to death. Even though Elizabeth did sign the execution warrant but neither submit it to her advisors nor truly gave the order to act on it. As it was a hugely significant order since it involved the execution of a fellow queen, she was clever than to set a precedent of killing a monarch. However, the warrant was secretly taken by one of her secretary. Mary was secretly beheaded at Fotheringhay castle later that year. In addition to Elizabeth's capabilities of cruelty and compassion for the sake of order in and out of the state, she also used religion to govern her people and set them in order.

## **5. Religion as an Instrument of Order**

Until the fifteenth century, the state was dominated by the Church and religion. There was a power struggle between the state and the church. Machiavelli criticized the Roman Catholic Church and the Christian values (and morality itself). To him, Christianity glorifies suffering and makes people meek, passive, merciful, and effeminate. For Machiavelli, the church was the cause of disunity. So, he advocated for total separation between politics and religion.

More importantly, Machiavelli seeks to use religion and the church as a tool for building national customs and habits that will help the state preserve peace and order, as well as social stability. In chapter XXI of (*the prince*), he states that “in order to undertake greater enterprises, always making use of religion (1998.88). He also said that to be his own master, must the new prince truly the new prince be his own prophet and establish a new religion? The great power of religion may be seen in what Moses and David founded, as well as what Savonarola almost managed to do in Machiavelli's time and place. Because the ruler cannot earn honor for himself unless he restores order to his principality, utilizing religion for himself includes using it to suit human desires in general (Machiavelli. xxii).

Moreover, he stated in chapter I of (*Discorsi*)<sup>7</sup> that using ancient Rome as an example, he argues for the significance of religion in government: "Therefore, everyone who examines Roman history properly understands how important religion was in directing armies, encouraging the people, keeping men good, and making the wicked embarrassed."(Korvela, 65).

According to Machiavelli, religion was indispensable in making the Roman army confident and people feeling more connected when they share a common religion. The decline in religious respect among the people is a sign of the state's impending demise. Consequently, Machiavelli focused on using religion as a tool to preserve peace and order and maintain the stability of society.

Religion was considered one of the biggest problems that England faced, especially since Elizabeth stood alone against the great Catholic powers of Europe. Elizabeth had vitality, intelligence and power to overawe and to command. In the beginning of her reign

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<sup>7</sup> The Italian name of the second book discourse on livy

religion needed to be settled before anything else. The Queen gathered with her councilors and the Parliament and introduced bills to restore the supremacy of Protestantism and to reintroduce reformed worship according to the 1552 book of common prayers (Brigden, 2000. 215-216).

At that time, Elizabeth had the title “Supreme Governor”, not supreme head due to the bills of The House of Commons<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the Act of uniformity that satisfies both the Catholics and the protestant was passed in the House of Lords by only three votes. Uniformity in religion for which none of the clergy had voted was imposed upon them. The clergy were bound to use the Book of Common Prayer, and the laity commanded to attend church on Sundays and holy days. Severer sanctions were imposed upon those who disobeyed. By law, every man and woman in every parish in England and Wales was to be at prayer, using the same prayer book, every Sunday (Brigden,268).

Furthermore, by heeding Machiavelli's counsel to use religion as a means of upholding national order. Queen Elizabeth's actions towards religious problems in England, we can find similarities between the two. As an example of similitude, the Queen used the act of uniformity to satisfy both the Catholics and the Protestant by having one prayer book for the Protestants with some Catholic traditions and with the hope of making her people happy. Besides, she realized that a few people refused to swear the oath of devotion to the queen in the new settlement.

Elizabeth's accommodating attitude appeared to succeed in general, but it did not satisfy everyone, and she received countless threats. For those who did not want to join the

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<sup>8</sup> The House of Commons' first act, approved in February 1559, combined several bills of supremacy to make Queen Elizabeth I the head of the church.

church services, they were forced to pay respectable amounts of money for not attending the holy days and the church on Sundays. Another law that the Queen enacted was in 1581. It retained the Queens's subjects in their due obedience, in which Catholics who continued to refuse to attend the services of the Church were fined an additional £20 each month, the equivalent of thousands of pounds in today's money. Furthermore, anyone who was discovered to have encouraged someone to convert to Catholicism was charged with treason and executed ("The Catholic Threat - Elizabethan Religious Settlement - AQA - GCSE History Revision - AQA").

Through looking at the Queen's action towards religion and towards the recusants, one can see that Elizabeth did not use religion as a means only but she used Machiavelli's teachings to deal with some plots that she faced. She was cunning as she gathered Catholics and Protestant in one book under one church. But when people refused to follow her rules and plotted against her, she acted ruthlessly by executing them. Again this shows her lion like nature. In addition to religion, a ruler should have a strong military force to sustain order.

## **6. Maintaining and Expanding a Powerful Army**

Every new ruler needs an army on his/her side. For an army not only protects the State and its citizens from direct threats, but also helps maintaining peace and stability in the country.

Machiavelli claims in (*the Prince*) that it is vital for a ruler to lay solid foundations for himself; otherwise, he would be destroyed. The two necessary components are powerful arms and good laws, because good laws cannot exist without powerful arms, and good laws must exist where powerful arms exist (1988.48).

In other words, he advocated perpetual military readiness in order to ensure the state's survival. To face any internal or external danger to his/her rule, the ruler should assemble a formidable army. A strong and regular army was required for the protection of the state. The state should develop its own autonomous, regular, and loyal army. Such an army should be made up of its own inhabitants and be prepared to grow as well as defend its national frontiers. Individuals must be trained for army duty, and military training should be mandatory for all able-bodied citizens.

During her reign, Elizabeth allocated enough funding to maintain strong and vicious soldiers. Alongside that, a fleet of nimble and well-armed battle ships and those funding's was a result of taxes and some stolen gold from the Spanish ships. Moreover Elizabeth was blessed to have Sir John Hawkins by her side, he was the one who designed and built the English navy warships when England was about to be struck by the mighty Spanish Armada. The fleet had about one hundred ships; many were frigates, and some galleons besides some fishing ships. They protected the kingdom from any external threat since England is an island (Cormpton, 2005,94).

Furthermore, even though Queen Elizabeth did not have as strong a fleet as the Spaniards, she was familiar with the art of war. She defeated Spain, which served as proof.

## **7. Elizabeth and the Art of War**

The first goal of each new ruler should be to learn about fighting since that is the sole art of a ruler. Warfare knowledge is so crucial that it serves to both maintain kings and queens in power and set them apart from commoners.

Machiavelli discusses the art of war idea in chapter fourteen of *The Prince*: "a prince should have no other object, nor any other thought, nor take anything else as his art but that of war and its orders and discipline; for that is the only art which is of concern to one who commands." (58).

In other words, Machiavelli claims that a prince must master that art of war through reading the history of the great romans to learn from their achievements. Furthermore a ruler must be armed, for it is absurd for an armed person to obey an unarmed person. More importantly does not mean those with most bodily force always win, the art of war to include the acquisition as well as the use of arms strategically.

A ruler who has no army but instead possessing warfare experience will prevail over one with an army but without the art of war. By the beginning of the sixteenth century England was in quite of danger of invasion from other foreign countries, when she ascended the throne the country's military force was depleted.

An example is when she was about to engage in war against Spain, which had a large fleet carrying over 30,000 solders. Nonetheless, Elizabeth was quite intelligent and fearless. She alongside Sir Francis Drake, who was an explorer, privateer, naval officer and a politician. He was known for preying on Spanish ships while circumnavigating earth (1577-1580). He also was credited for his defense of England by raiding Spain's harbor at Cádiz in 1587, as well as (according to many sources) by disrupting the Spanish Armada in the English Channel with fire ships in 1588 (Cormpton, 2005,88).

Elizabeth was a master of waiting and letting her opponent make the first move, thanks to Sir Francis Drake, who bought enough time for the Queen to fully prepare herself

for the Spanish armada. So she used that year to increase the size of her army (Cormpton, 2005, 86). Thus, through Machiavelli's thoughts on the art of war and Queen Elizabeth's art of war, it seemed as if Queen Elizabeth was familiar with Machiavelli's thoughts concerning these arts.

## **Conclusion**

There are many similarities between Machiavelli's teachings and those of Queen Elizabeth I. These similarities range from how to secure a state, to the use of religion as a political tool for maintaining order, to how a ruler should carry himself/herself in times of war and have a powerful army to defend his/her state from both external and internal threats. In other words, considering all the similarities, Queen Elizabeth I can be considered as Machiavellian ruler.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Elizabeth as a True Machiavellian**

#### **Introduction**

The works of Niccolò Machiavelli had a profound influence on the entire world and raised him to the rank of a Renaissance prince. More importantly, Machiavelli had an impact on Queen Elizabeth I in two different ways. Firstly, he was against betrayal, dishonesty, and self-interest. Secondly, he supported firmness, promptness, and toughness as crucial elements of leadership. Therefore, this third chapter will cover several aspects of the Queens reign, especially her education and foreign policy.

#### **1. Queen Elizabeth's Education**

In the sixteenth century, revolutionary educational principles that developed in Renaissance Italy had a significant impact on education. Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth Tudor all valued education, but princess Elizabeth's education was significantly different from that of her siblings, and that difference first became apparent at her very young age.

Princess Elizabeth blossomed in elegance and intelligence as she got older. She was always a very lovely child, and by the age of 12, she was significantly tall for her age. She also enjoyed books and learned a lot when reading in Greek, Latin, French, and Spanish. Her tutors all agreed that she was an extremely bright young lady. (Crompton 8).

In this regard, Elizabeth Tudor was a very conservative individual who had strong beliefs about her position in society. At the age of 25, Elizabeth already learned several challenging political and personal lessons that had shaped her into the queen she grew up to be, harmonizing very well with traditions of the English monarchy and her humanistic education. She had a temper as scorching as her red hair, and her attitude caused her to be wary and stubborn, confident in her position of power and petulant in the face of change. These qualities had a significant impact on the course of English history. On November 17, 1558, Elizabeth ascended the throne in a country and era where the monarch's personal reign was very surreal. Similarly, the influence of her education was a mixture of early Italianate Court humanism and Protestant evangelism. (Haigh. 27-72).

Moreover, Machiavelli's thoughts and books had influenced many during the Elizabethan period. Richard Morison, secretary to her father's minister Thomas Cromwell, who was in Italy until 1536, had been credited with using Machiavellian doctrines and Elizabeth's ministers Francis Walsingham, William Cecil, and Nicholas Bacon all read Machiavelli's book *the Prince*. Sir Christopher Hatton owned a copy, and in 1560, a translation of Machiavelli's book *The Art of War* was dedicated to Elizabeth. A dedication repeatedly included in later editions. "Given Elizabeth's extensive humanistic education, her fluency in Italian and her life-long interest in philosophy, it is highly probable that she was, like most of her councilors, familiar with Machiavelli's ideas"(Hilton 42). Furthermore, toward the end of the sixteenth century, the knowledge of Machiavelli in England was boosted by London's famous printer at the time, John Wolfe (1548–1601), who between 1584 and 1588 printed *Discorsi, Il Principe*, and *L'Arte della Guerra* (Petrina 305).

Furthermore, there is no direct evidence that Queen Elizabeth owned a copy of (*II Principe*), but, that very book was the hand-book of Cromwell, Burghley, and perhaps of the

Queen herself (Greenlaw). Additionally, in an article published in *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, Walter Alison Phillips proclaimed that Elizabeth was a student of Machiavelli on the grounds, first, that “there is a certain theatrical aspect about both her private and public life, which seems to show that she was acting a carefully studied role secondly, that she followed the Machiavellian doctrine” (Weissberger).

It is highly suspected that the Queen had a translated copy of Machiavelli’s book<sup>9</sup> and perhaps had also a copy of *the Prince*, which of course enhanced her humanistic education. Because Machiavelli was also a humanist in his own right, his political thoughts were devoted to teaching new rulers how to be and how to act for a better, united, and secured state. So, as long as the Queen was concerned with Machiavelli’s teachings it will be displayed in her statecraft. Especially in her foreign policy.

## **2. The Queen’s Foreign Policy**

Elizabeth's foreign policy was mostly defensive in nature. While she was able to establish diplomatic contacts with some of the world's most powerful nations and backed Protestant battles throughout Europe, during her reign, Elizabeth encountered opposition mainly from catholic Rome, France, and Spain. These were the strongest, and wealthiest countries in Europe at the time, and as such posed a serious threat. But of course that didn’t scare her away, because:

“In the field of foreign policy Elizabeth was essentially a Machiavellian .... The chief object of her diplomacy, from which she never consciously wavered, was to establish her

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<sup>9</sup> "The Art of War" a book written between 1519 and 1520 and published in 1521 by Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli(cited from: Skinner, Quentin. *MACHIAVELLI : A Very Short Introduction*. 2019.)

throne and to maintain her throne and kingdom in a position of unassailable security and power. To attain this end she was prepared to use every instrument that gave promise of being serviceable, every ally that chance or necessity threw in her way, while at the same time avoiding commitment that might jeopardize her own freedom of action, or lessen the advantage she possessed as the ruler of an insular state” ( Black. 333).

Queen Elizabeth I's foreign policy was centered on the advantages that any specific course of action might have for England. Beyond that,

“Her first priority was security. To defend her borders, she was prepared to use force to keep the French out of Scotland and the Spaniards out of Ireland. She also endeavoured through a mixture of diplomacy and military action to eliminate the dynastic challenge that came from Mary, Queen of Scots and her foreign allies. To prevent a joint invasion by the Catholic powers, she tried to keep on amicable terms with both France and Spain for as long as humanly possible” (Doran 65)

In addition to what has already been mentioned concerning Elizabeth's tactics of foreign policy, neither accepting nor rejecting her suitors proposals was a smart strategy used by the Queen when it comes to foreign policies. Hence, most of her suitors were monarchs and royals. And most of them wanted England. By blatantly refusing a monarch for marriage, it could lead to unwanted tensions between the two countries and therefore, grounds for war could easily be made or fabricated.

In other words, she was cunning like a fox and a master of disguise and concealment, and all those features are what a Machiavellian would use or approve of. Queen Elizabeth's

decisions towards foreign policy were founded on Machiavelli's teachings, and they were centered on employing religion as a means of maintaining the state's order.

### **3. Elizabeth and Religion**

Queen Elizabeth I's restoration of Protestantism in England approach was opposed to her half-sister and predecessor, Queen Mary I, who actively attempted to eliminate Protestantism from English culture. By burning so many men and women at the stake, condemning them of heresy only because they shared a different faith. Elizabeth undertook her own drive to banish Catholicism from England, despite it being more subdued and non-violent than Mary's. In fact, some of the more fervent Protestants found Elizabeth's moderate views on religion offensive because they thought her reforms fell short of ridding English society of what they regarded to be the last lingering Catholic elements. Since their fervor would have interfered with the type of control and order she was seeking to build, Elizabeth was not particularly interested in accommodating either Protestantism or Catholicism. Her religious laws, such as the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity, went far further to formalize the church's authority and to regulate religious practices (“What Was Queen Elizabeth I’s Relationship to Religion in England? | Britannica”).

Moreover, when Elizabeth issued the Act of Uniformity to her parliament, this becomes apparent that Her Act aims to restore Protestantism as the official religion of her kingdom. By creating the Book of Prayer and uniting the Church of England. Both Elizabeth’s policies, Act of Uniformity and Act of Supremacy can be considered as a sign of a Machiavellian ruler.

Furthermore, throughout Elizabeth's usage of religion constantly to carry out necessary tasks and sustaining order in her state, is similar to Machiavelli's advice of using religion as an instrument. For example, Elizabeth established a Catholic-only jail in Wisbech, on the Isle of Ely in 1572. In the hopes that they wouldn't later "corrupt others in stubbornness." Only those who were deemed traitors were put to death, albeit this did not simply apply to rebels but also to people who had seriously disobeyed the law. Such as James Felton, who in 1570 nailed the papal Bull of Excommunication to the gate of the bishop of London's palace and was beheaded for it (Doran. 54).

In addition, another act the Queen utilized was the 1581 act. To ensure and guarantee her subjects pledged allegiance, is penalizing Catholics an additional £20 per month for continuing to refuse to attend Protestant Church services. Besides that, treason charges and perhaps execution were brought against anybody found to have influenced someone to convert to Catholicism (The Catholic Threat - Elizabethan Religious Settlement).

In other words, Queen Elizabeth I was a brilliant Machiavellian, she used religion as a means of order. By creating Acts that required people to accept her judgments and not defy them. Along with her beliefs about religion, Elizabeth also enjoyed providing entertainment for her people through celebrations, festivals, carnivals and shows.

#### **4. Entertaining People**

A "golden era" of culture and art has been noticeable during Elizabeth's reign. She surely promoted the growth of the performing arts, music, theater, and sports, which entertained her people.

The theater drew people from all countries. Both affluent and destitute found other ways to pass the time. The rich at court had nearly daily access to banquets and feasts, masques, and games (competitions of sword fighting, wrestling, or jousting). The rest of society went to festivals, which were sometimes rather loud, and observed religious holidays. Formal dances like the galliard at court and jigs among the lower and middle classes were both quite popular (“Pastimes of the Rich and Poor - Popular Culture in Elizabethan England - OCR B - GCSE History Revision - OCR B”).

Moreover, people enjoyed watching cruel sports like animal fighting, which queen Elizabeth also loved. Queen Elizabeth had pleasure in baiting bears and bulls (where the bull or bear was pitted against a pack of dogs). Dogfights and cockfights were popular hobbies among the impoverished, and participants sometimes bet on the results (Hilton 139).

In addition to that, Queen Elizabeth I entertained her people through festivals and spectacle similar to what Machiavelli’s advice in *the Prince*. He states that “a ruler should at suitable times of the year keep the people occupied with festivals and spectacles”(1998.91).

In other words, Elizabeth I did follow Machiavelli’s teachings, cared for her own people, and entertained them through festivals and spectacles to win their love. Besides entertaining her subjects, the Queen was wise, intelligent and a Machiavellian in choosing her own ministers.

## **5. The Queen’s Machiavellian Ministers**

Despite being a bit dictatorial, temperamental and unpredictable, Elizabeth had sound political judgment and carefully selected her ministers. It is essential for new rulers to select

effective ministers since a monarch's choice of those around him speaks highly about his intelligence. Machiavelli advised rulers to carefully select their ministers and to surround themselves with intelligent individuals to provide counsel. This is exactly what Queen Elizabeth did, Robert Dudley, Sir Francis Walsingham, and William Cecil were three of her most trusted and significant advisors.

Moreover, Sir Francis Walsingham, the spymaster for Queen Elizabeth. Thanks to his extensive network of spies, she was able to stay informed about everything going on in her state. The Queen selected about nineteen clever men to be by her side, and she also had to ensure that no member grew too strong or disloyal in order for her to keep them under her control like a Machiavellian would.

Moreover, Elizabeth's government had about six hundred men of law in charge of the principal offices of state, as well as a similar number in charge of Crown holdings (which funded the administrative costs). Local sheriffs maintained social and economic regulation, as well as law and order, with the help of unpaid justices of the peace. Another strategy that was used by the Queen to win over the favor of her people, was the concept of (building on people).

## **6. Building on People**

Machiavelli believed that people were ungrateful, fickle, dishonest, cowardly, and avaricious. Nevertheless, he counseled the ruler not to fully cross them. Because a realm or a kingdom without the people's support and allegiance would surely not last long.

Machiavelli writes in *The Prince*, “.. Whoever founds on the people founds on mud. For that is true when a private citizen lays his foundation on them, and allows himself to think that people will liberate him if he is oppressed by enemies or by the magistrates” (1998.41).

Moreover, the speech Elizabeth gave to her soldiers and people when she learned that the Armada was approaching is one of the most well-known examples of her "building on the people" concept. She then informed the soldiers how lucky they were to be Englishmen, and that they now had to rely on themselves to defend both their nation and their sovereign from the Spaniards. The Queen was able to "build on the people" as a result of her audience's enthusiastic response to her speech (Neale. 296).

The Machiavellian maxim that the monarch must be prepared to lead the people into combat was illustrated in this very scenario as well. She assured the troops that she would lead them herself in battle and that she would gladly give up her life if necessary to save England from the Spanish.

## **7. Elizabeth's Speeches**

Throughout Queen Elizabeth's reign, she gave many unforgettable speeches in different events and occasions. One of which is the one she gave for Parliament in 1576 and to her army. The speech influenced them deeply.

Chadwick states that “ he has suspicion concerning Elizabeth's speeches as if she was reading from a book about some matters”. Moreover, it seemed like as if she was echoing sentiments from *the Prince*. For her 1576 speech, Elizabeth wrote:

“Can a prince, which of necessity discontent a number to delight and please a few, continue so long time without great offence, much mislike, or common grudge? Or haps it oft that princes’ actions are conceived in so good part and favourably interpreted?”

In 1586, she wrote

“...we princes, I tell you, are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world duly observed. The eyes of many behold our actions; a spot is soon spied in our garments, a blemish quickly noted in our doings. It behooveth us to be careful that our proceedings be just and honorable”.

Furthermore, in 1601 she said:

“Of My selfe I must say this, I never was any greedy scraping grasper, nor a strict fast holding Prince, nor yet a waster. My heart was never set upon any worldly goods, but only for my Subjects good. What you doe bestow on Me, I will not hoard up, but receive it to bestow on you againe; yea Mine owne Properties I account yours to bee expended for your good, and your eyes shall see the bestowing of it for your wellfare... And if my Princely bountie have beene abused, and my Grants turned to the hurt of my People contrary to my will and meaning, or if any in Authoritie under mee have neglected, or converted what I have committed unto them, I hope God they will not lay their culps to my charge.”(Chadwick)

Furthermore, she also wrote in a speech in 1563:

“Since there can be no duer debt than princes’ word, to keep that unspotted for my part, as one that would be loath that the self thing that keepeth merchant’s credit from craze should

be the cause that princes' speeches should merit blame, and so their honor quail; an answer therefore I will make and this it is: the two proceedings that you presented me, in many words expressed, contained these two things: my sortie in marriage, and of your cares the greatest, my succession, of which two the last I think is best be touched, and of the other a silent thought may serve, for I had thought it had been so desired as none other tree's blossoms should have been minded or hope of my fruit had been denied you".

Elizabeth also frequently refers to a prince or a royal responsibility in the third person, as if she was reading from a manuscript, in a number of her speeches. Her acts have been connected by contemporary interpreters to a number of Machiavellian themes, including the lion and the fox, and how it is preferable for a leader to be feared than adored. Additionally, she mirrored Machiavelli's views in her own speeches, saying that power does not come from merely appeasing certain interests but also from having the backing of the general populace (Chadwick).

## **8. Elizabeth as a True Machiavellian**

A Machiavellian is someone who understands when to act like a manipulator, deceiver, and cunning like a fox. There are times of need when he or she should act the exact opposite of what has been stated in the beginning of the paragraph.

Hume proclaimed that Queen Elizabeth was:

“Careless of the rights or feelings of others, so long as her own end was served; supremely vain, violent, and greedy, and absolutely self-centered, yet steadfast in the pursuit of her objects, good and bad. These were the qualities which enabled Elizabeth to triumph, and the English to rise from the ashes of weaker, more scrupulous peoples.” (Hume. 417)

In other words, Martin Hume and most of the other historians that have been mentioned throughout this research agree that Queen Elizabeth's acts would show her to be a true Machiavellian ruler.

## **Conclusion**

Elizabeth's intelligence and, when required, forceful leadership led to victories throughout a period of immense danger both at domestic and international levels. She passed away peacefully on March 24, 1603, in Richmond Palace, considered by many as a legend throughout her existence. For two centuries, the day of her coronation was a national holiday. Elizabeth's successor was James VI of Scotland, who became James I of England.

After all, historians who studied the relationship between Niccolo Machiavelli and Queen Elizabeth I came to nearly the same conclusion, demonstrating that the monarch was influenced by Machiavelli's ideas and teachings which again, makes her a true Machiavellian.

## General Conclusion

Our study has been conducted as an attempt to validate and ensure Elizabeth's I reign, as a true Machiavellian ruler. Through a comparison between the two prominent historical figures, i.e., Elizabeth I and Niccolo Machiavelli. This study is an examination of Niccolo Machiavelli's books, theories, and teachings about how a true ruler should conduct herself/himself. This examination was based on a qualitative analysis of Machiavelli's literary works (*The Prince, Discourse on Levy, and the Art of War*).

This study also provided a background of the renaissance in general, and Renaissance England during the Tudor era in particular. Next, it aimed at comparing between Niccolo Machiavelli's political views and teachings, and Elizabeth's political views in particular and reign in general. Then, the study proved that the latter was a true Machiavellian ruler.

Due to the scarcity of the sources and previous studies, this study couldn't fully reach its objectives. In fact, this very topic has never been tackled by researchers from our university.

There is no research that is free of shortcomings, errors, and mistakes and this one is surely not an exception. We tried our best to find and gather all the books, articles, online articles, videos, and documentaries that we could find in order to come up with this final product. Furthermore, this research could have reached more conclusive results if more sources on the topic had been available.

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## Résumé

La présente étude vise à analyser et à étudier l'impact des enseignements de Machiavel sur les nouveaux dirigeants en général et sur la reine Elizabeth I en particulier. L'étude tente de répondre aux questions suivantes : La reine Elizabeth I était-elle un dirigeant machiavélique ? Existe-t-il des théories et des enseignements politiques machiavéliques appliqués par la reine ? La reine a-t-elle lu/possédé un exemplaire de l'un des livres de Machiavel ? Dans cette étude, une approche analytique-qualitative est adoptée par l'analyse des données collectées. Les principaux résultats ont prouvé que le règne d'Elizabeth I était en fait fortement influencé par les pensées politiques de Niccolo Machiavel. De plus, que la reine Elizabeth I était en effet un véritable dirigeant machiavélique

**Mots-clés:** Politique, Angleterre, Machiavel, Elizabeth, théories machiavéliques, enseignements machiavéliques.

## ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تحليل وبحث تأثير تعاليم مكياڤيلي على الحكام الجدد بشكل عام وعلى الملكة إليزابيث الأولى بشكل خاص. تحاول الدراسة الإجابة على الأسئلة التالية: هل كانت الملكة إليزابيث الأولى حاكمة ميكافيلية؟ هل هناك أي نظريات وتعاليم سياسية ميكافيلية تم تطبيقها من قبل الملكة؟ هل قرأت / امتلكت الملكة نسخة من أي من كتب مكياڤيلي؟ في هذه الدراسة ، تم اعتماد النهج التحليلي النوعي من خلال تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها. أثبتت النتائج الرئيسية أن عهد إليزابيث الأولى كان في الواقع متأثرًا بشدة بأفكار نيكولو ميكافيلي السياسية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، كانت الملكة إليزابيث الأولى حاكمة ميكافيلية حقيقية

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** السياسة ، إنجلترا ، مكياڤيلي ، إليزابيث ، النظريات و التقنيات الميكافيلية.