

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

BOTERO
The Reason of State

Niccolò Machiavelli's seminal work, *The Prince*, argued that a ruler could not govern morally and be successful. Giovanni Botero disputed this argument and proposed a system for the maintenance and expansion of a state that remained moral in character. Founding an Antimachiavellian tradition that aimed to refute Machiavelli in practice, Botero is an important figure in early modern political thought, though he remains relatively unknown. His most notable work, *Della ragion di Stato*, first popularized the term "reason of state" and made a significant contribution to a major political debate of the time – the perennial issue of the relationship between politics and morality – and the book became a political "bestseller" in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. This translation of the 1589 volume introduces Botero to a wider Anglophone readership and extends this influential text to a modern audience of students and scholars of political thought.

Robert Bireley, SJ, has frequently lectured on Machiavelli and the reaction to him, and his *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (1990) identified a particular school of Antimachiavellian writers. Other books have dealt with early modern Catholicism and the relationship between religion and politics in the Thirty Years' War. His biography, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578–1637*, appeared in 2014. He has been a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton and the National Humanities Center in North Carolina, and has served as president of the American Catholic Historical Association. He taught history at Loyola University Chicago for forty-three years and is now retired.

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HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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BOTERO

The Reason of State

ROBERT BIRELEY

Loyola University Chicago



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Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Further Reading</i>	xii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiii
<i>Introduction</i>	xiv
Dedication	I
Book One	4
1. What is Reason of State	4
2. Division of Dominions	5
3. Of Subjects	5
4. Of the Causes of the Ruin of States	6
5. Which is the Greater Work, to Expand or to Conserve a State	7
6. Which States are More Lasting, the Large, the Small, or the Middle-Sized	8
7. Whether United States or Dispersed Ones are More Lasting	10
8. On the Ways to Conserve [a State]	13
9. How Great Must the Excellence of the <i>Virtù</i> of a Prince Be	15
10. Of the Two Types of Excellence in the <i>Virtù</i> of a Prince	16
11. What are the Virtues that are Suited to Produce Love and Reputation	17

Contents

12. Of Justice	18
13. Two Types of Royal Justice	19
14. Of the Justice of a King toward his Subjects	19
15. Of Justice between Subject and Subject	21
16. Of the Ministers of Justice	23
17. On the Retention of Magistrates in Office	26
18. Words of Caution regarding the Administration of Justice	28
19. On Liberality	30
20. On Freeing the Needy from Misery	30
21. The Promotion of <i>Virtù</i>	31
22. Words of Caution about Liberality	32
Book Two	34
1. Of Prudence	34
2. Of the Knowledge Suitable to Sharpen Prudence	34
3. Of History	36
4. Of the Knowledge of the Nature and Inclinations of Subjects	38
5. Of the Location of a Country	38
6. Points about Prudence	41
7. Of Secrecy	47
8. Of Counsels	48
9. Of Not Introducing Novelties	50
10. Of Valor	51
11. Of the Ways to Preserve Reputation	52
12. Of those Princes who because of their Greatness or Reputation have been Said to be Great or Wise	57
13. Of the Wise	60
14. Of the Virtues which Preserve the Aforementioned Qualities	61
15. Of Religion	61
16. Of the Means to Propagate Religion	64
17. Of Temperance	67
Book Three	71
1. Of the Ways to Divert the People	71
2. Of Honorable and Great Enterprises	74
3. Of Enterprises of War	75
4. Whether it is Expedient for a Prince to Go to War in Person	76

Contents

Book Four	80
1. Of the Way to Avoid Rumbings and Rebellions	80
2. Of the Three Types of Persons who Make Up the City	80
3. Of the Great Ones	81
4. Of the Princes of the Blood	81
5. Of Feudal Barons	85
6. Of Those who are Great because of their Courage	86
7. Of the Poor	88
Book Five	92
1. Of Acquired Subjects, How they Ought to be Treated	92
2. Of Infidels and Heretics	96
3. Of the Refractory	97
4. How they Have to be Discouraged	98
5. Whether Letters Are or Are Not an Aid to Render Men Brave under Arms	100
6. How to Weaken their Power	102
7. How to Weaken their Union	104
8. How to Take Away the Means of Uniting with Other Peoples	107
Book Six	108
1. Of Security from Foreign Enemies	108
2. Of Fortresses	108
3. Of the Conditions of the Fortresses	109
4. Of Colonies	111
5. Of Garrisons	112
6. Of Keeping the Frontiers Deserted	113
7. Of Prevention	113
8. Of Maintaining Factions and Plots	115
9. Of Leagues with Neighbors	115
10. Of Eloquence	116
11. Of those Things that Have to be Done after the Enemy has Entered the Country	117
12. Of Depriving the Enemy of Food Supply	117
13. Of Diversion	118
14. Of Agreement with Enemies	118
15. Of Seeking Protection and Submitting to Others	119
16. Of Standing Above the Fray while Neighbors are at War	119

Contents

Book Seven	121
1. Of Forces [Resources]	121
2. Is it Fitting for a Prince to Accumulate Treasure	122
3. That it is Necessary that the Prince have Treasure	124
4. Of Revenues	125
5. Of Loans	127
6. Of Aid from the Church	127
7. Of Extraordinary Income	128
8. Of Abstention from Inappropriate Expenses and from Giving out of Vanity	129
9. How it is Necessary to Conserve the Surplus	129
10. Of People	130
11. Of a Numerous Population	130
Book Eight	134
1. Two Ways to Increase People and Resources	134
2. Of Agriculture	134
3. Of Industry	137
4. Of Matrimony and the Education of Children	140
5. Of Colonies	142
6. Of Ways to Grow Rich at the Expense of Others	143
7. Of the Means Taken by the Romans	143
8. Of the Purchase of States	145
9. Of Enlistment	146
10. Of States Taken as Pledges	147
11. Of Alliances of Kinship	147
12. Of Adoption	148
13. Of the Method Used by the Poles	148
14. Of Alliances	148
15. Of Commerce, and Whether it is Suitable for a King to Engage in it	151
16. Of the Method Employed by the Sultans of Egypt and by the Portuguese	151
17. Of the Method Used by the Chinese	152
18. Of the Method Used by the Turks	152
Book Nine	154
1. Of the Ways to Increase Resources	154
2. Whether a Prince Ought to Train his Own Subjects for War or Not	154

Contents

3. Of the Selection of Soldiers	159
4. Of Arms	161
5. Of the Ornaments of Arms	163
6. Of Order	164
7. Of the Justice of the Cause	166
8. Of Recourse to God	166
9. Of Keeping Soldiers Far from their Home	168
10. Of Discipline	169
11. Of Reward	172
12. Of Punishment	178
13. Of Emulation	180
14. Of the License Given to the Janissaries	180
15. Of Labor	181
16. Of Determination	182
17. Of Placing the Soldiers before the Necessity of Fighting	182
18. Of Binding Soldiers by Oath or Execration	184
19. Of Familiarity with the Enemy	186
20. Of Exploiting your Advantage	187
21. Of Forestalling the Enemy	187
22. Of Stratagems	188
23. Of the Particular Way that Caesar Increased the Spirit of his Soldiers	188
Book Ten	190
1. Of the Captain	190
2. Of the Ways that the Captain can Make his Soldiers Spirited	191
3. Of Good Fortune	191
4. Of Courage and Example	193
5. Of Cheerfulness	194
6. Of the Ways to Indicate Certainty of Victory	194
7. Of Caution	195
8. Of Alertness	195
9. Of Eloquence and Another Matter	197
10. Which is Greater, Sea Power or Land Power	197
11. Which is of Greater Importance, the Cavalry or the Infantry	199
Appendix A Of the Means to Calm Troubles Once they have Arisen	202

Contents

Appendix B In the Accumulation of Wealth One Ought Not to Continue <i>ad Infinitum</i>	208
Appendix C Against Whom the Prince Ought to Deploy his Military Forces	212
Appendix D Of Reputation	216
Book One	216
1. What is Reputation	216
2. What is the Origin of Reputation	218
3. Of the Importance of Reputation	220
4. Grades and Types of Reputation	223
<i>Index</i>	225

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Robert Bireley, SJ

Further Reading

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Abbreviations

<i>BD</i>	<i>De la raison d'État (1589–1598) par Giovanni Botero</i> , trans. and ed. Pierre Benedittini and Romain Descendre, with an introduction by Romain Descendre (Paris, 2014)
<i>RS</i>	<i>The Reason of State</i> , this edition
<i>RS</i> 1590	<i>Della ragion di stato</i> (Rome, 1590)
<i>RS</i> 1596	<i>Della ragion di stato</i> (Milan and Turin, 1596)
<i>RS</i> 1598	<i>Della ragion di stato</i> (Venice, 1598)

Introduction

“If a ruler who wants always to act honorably is surrounded by many unscrupulous men his downfall is inevitable. Therefore, a ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally when this becomes necessary.” So Niccolò Machiavelli wrote in the fifteenth chapter of *The Prince* in 1513. Writing in 1924, Friedrich Meinecke, a historian of Machiavellianism, contended that “Machiavelli’s theory was a sword which was plunged into the flank of the body politic of Western humanity, causing it to shriek and rear up. This was bound to happen; for not only had genuine moral feeling been seriously wounded, but death had also been threatened to the Christian views of all churches and sects.”¹ If by success was meant the creation and maintenance of a powerful state, it was not possible for a prince or man of politics to be successful who adhered to Christian or moral principles. This position was not completely new; it had been asserted in the ancient world and often enough reduced to practice. But Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and its companion volume, *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*, now gradually circulated first in manuscript and then after the early 1530s in print. His blatant assertion of the incompatibility of political success with traditional Christian morality raised the issue of the relationship of religion and morality to politics to a new prominence in the sixteenth century, and it has retained its relevance up to the present day. One need only think of the negative connotation often attached, unfortunately, to the designation “politician” and to the widespread conception of politics as “dirty.”

¹ Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of “raison d’État” and its Place in Modern History*, trans. Douglas Scott, introd. W. Stark (New York, 1965; orig. 1924), 49.

Introduction

Several writers criticized Machiavelli vigorously, including the Portuguese bishop Jeronimo Osorio in his *On Christian Nobility* first published at Lisbon in 1542, and both *The Prince* and the *Discourses* were placed on the Index of Pope Paul IV in 1559. But the Italian priest Giovanni Botero took a new approach in his *Reason of State*, first published in 1589. In his dedication of the volume to Wolfgang Theodore, the prince-bishop of Salzburg, he first noted that in the course of travels in Italy and France he had often heard people talking of “reason of state,” a term that they associated with Machiavelli and with the Roman historian Tacitus. Both authors showed little respect for conscience, and Botero wondered at and disdained this “barbarous style of government that is so shamelessly opposed to the law of God to the point of saying that some things are licit by reason of state and others by conscience.” Nothing could be “more impious or irrational.” At first he was inclined to write another critique of Machiavelli. But then he was persuaded that much more effective would be a book that laid out a program counter to Machiavelli, that is, that showed how a prince could become great and successfully govern his people by using moral methods, indeed that he could do so more efficiently. Members of the Roman curia, including the powerful Cardinal Giovanni Antonio Facchinetti, who reigned briefly as Pope Innocent IX in 1591, may have encouraged him, as too may have Minuccio Minucci, former papal emissary in Bavaria and now a papal advisor on German affairs, who later recommended *The Reason of State* to Duke Maximilian of Bavaria. So Botero published his *Reason of State* in 1589. He co-opted the term “reason of state,” and used it in a positive sense. The very first sentence in the original edition read “Reason of state is the knowledge of the means suitable to found, preserve, and expand a dominion.” His was a Catholic reason of state that pointed the way to a moral politics.

The book became an immediate bestseller, the “book of the day” as one historian has written.² A contemporary writer explained its success: “Botero is marvelous. He has so accommodated morality, justice, and obligation with the advantage of the prince as to merit in this respect immortal praise.”³ Fifteen Italian editions appeared before 1700, six

² Rodolfo De Mattei, *Il problema della “ragion di stato” nell’età della Controriforma* (Milan and Naples, 1979), 65; see also among many others, André Stegman, *L’héroïsme cornélien: Genèse et signification* (Paris: 1968), vol. II, 173–74.

³ Apollinare de’ Calderini, *Discorsi sopra la ragion di stato del Signor Giovanni Botero* (Milan, 1597), 64.

Introduction

Spanish editions by 1606, a French edition in 1599, three Latin editions between 1602 and 1666. The book was known at the court of the Wittelsbach Duke Maximilian of Bavaria probably by 1591, and at the Habsburg courts of Madrid and Graz in the early 1590s. Emperor Ferdinand II later had two copies in his private library. The book was also read in Protestant lands. The well-known German professor Hermann Conring praised Botero's christianization of Machiavelli in his introduction to his Latin translation in 1666. Meanwhile, also in 1589, the Dutch humanist Justus Lipsius published a similar treatise, *Six Books on Politics*, that also aimed to lay out a program for a Christian reason of state. So the two of them inaugurated an Antimachiavellian tradition that endured well into the seventeenth century.

Botero was a child of the Italian Counter-Reformation. The European world had undergone convulsive changes between the appearance of Machiavelli's *Prince* in 1513 and the publication of *The Reason of State* in 1589. The great European monarchies France, Spain, and England had consolidated to a degree, and most of the smaller Italian and German states had moved in the same direction. But France had erupted in a religious, civil war in 1562 that would last until the end of the century, and the Dutch rebellion against Spanish rule broke out in 1566. Spain and Portugal had established their colonial empires in America and in Asia, and this development was accompanied by commercial expansion both in Europe and beyond. Urban populations grew rapidly. Rome's population numbered 55,000 in mid-century; by the end of the century it had reached 100,000. The cultural ideals of the Renaissance, with its fascination with the ancient world of Greece and Rome, persisted and the arts flourished. Michelangelo died only in 1564. Above all, there was the Reformation which, starting with Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* of 1517, divided Europe into Catholic and Protestant areas, the latter divided further into various churches. The Calvinists had now become the more militant branch of Protestantism. The Counter-Reformation and Catholic Reform can best be understood as the attempt of the Catholic church to adapt to this changing world. The Council of Trent, which met on and off from 1545 to 1563, represented a milestone in this process. The Antimachiavellians belonged to this effort at adaptation inasmuch as they sought to outline a Catholic, moral politics that would result in the effective government of the evolving state.

Giovanni Botero was born at Bene Vagienna in Piedmont in 1544. When he reached fifteen his parents sent him to study at the Jesuit college

Introduction

in Palermo in Sicily, where his Jesuit uncle taught. The following year he transferred to the Roman College and soon entered the Jesuit novitiate in Rome. He continued his studies at the Roman College, where the future theologian and cardinal Robert Bellarmine was a classmate. He was then sent to teach rhetoric and philosophy at several small Jesuit colleges in Italy and France. For much of 1568 and 1569 he was assigned to Paris, and this opened his eyes to what he later considered the greatest city in Christendom. But the young Jesuit suffered from moodiness and poor health, and he had trouble settling down in the Society even after he was ordained to the priesthood in 1572. In 1580, quietly and honorably, he left the Society.

At this low point in his life, Carlo Borromeo, the saintly archbishop of Milan, picked him up. Borromeo assigned him to a parish and then brought him to Milan in 1582 as his secretary. The two years that he served in this capacity before Borromeo's death in 1584 left a strong impression on him, and he published an account of the saint's death and burial that circulated widely. Botero now became closely associated with the ruling dynasty of Savoy. In 1583 he had dedicated a small volume, *On Kingly Wisdom*, to Duke Charles Emmanuel. The duke now sent him on a mission to Paris, probably to make contact with the reconstituted Catholic League or possibly with Henry III. There he remained from February to December of 1585, during the height of the Religious Wars which he experienced at first hand. The duke of Anjou died shortly before his arrival, and so the Huguenot Henry of Navarre now stood next in line for the throne. The Huguenots, the Catholic League, and the party of Henry III faced off against one another. While in Paris Botero established a close bond with the Savoyard ambassador to the court of France, René de Lucinge, lord of Allymes, who had made a brilliant career in the service of the duke of Savoy. Lucinge exercised considerable influence on him, especially in the direction of political realism. Botero was to draw many examples from a volume that Lucinge was then writing, *Of the Birth, Extent, and Fall of States*,⁴ that would be published in 1588. It was also at this time that Botero first read Jean Bodin's *Six Books of the Republic*, from which he would subsequently draw material, especially on the economy. When he returned to Italy, Botero had learned about the difficulties of politics in the real world.

⁴ René de Lucinge, *De la naissance, durée et chute des estats*, ed. Michael J. Heath (Geneva, 1984).

Introduction

Botero now accepted a position as tutor and councillor to the twenty-two-year-old Federico Borromeo, cousin of Charles, and accompanied him to Rome in 1586. Federico was made a cardinal in the following year, and this facilitated Botero's contact with high ecclesiastical circles. It was a flourishing period in the history of papal Rome. Sixtus V was about to initiate "a program of urban development without parallel in any other European city."⁵ Intellectual life was lively and characterized by a "new humanism."⁶ There Botero associated with the humanist Piero Maffei, the philosopher Francesco Patrizi, and the Florentine political writer Scipione Ammirato. On July 14, 1587 he was named a consultor to the Congregation of the Index, of which Robert Bellarmine was a leading member. As a councillor to Borromeo, Botero took part in four papal conclaves, three in the year of the three popes, 1590–91, and the fourth that elected Clement VIII in 1592.

Botero's years in Rome from 1586 to 1595 turned out to be the most productive of his life. He returned from France prepared to write his three main works: *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities* which appeared in 1588, *The Reason of State* in 1589, and *The Universal Relations*, which appeared in four parts between 1591 and 1596. Subsequently, *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities* was usually published with and was to a degree overshadowed by *The Reason of State*.⁷ It is a small book of only sixty-six pages in the Firpo edition compared to the 289 pages of *The Reason of State*. The volume represented a pioneering look at the phenomenon of the European cities which had been expanding since the late fifteenth century. Botero's reputation as the founder of demographic studies derives largely from this book. For him the strength of a city or state was measured largely by the size of its population, a theme on which he elaborated in *The Reason of State*. He also speculated about the way that disease, famine, and war limit the growth of population and the manner in which productive capacity sets restrictions on the number of people in a region and forces them

⁵ Torgil Magnuson, *Rome in the Age of Bernini*, vol. 1: *From the Election of Sixtus V to the Death of Urban VIII* (Stockholm and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1982), 16.

⁶ Alphonse Dupront, "D'un humanisme chrétien en Italie à la fin du XVI^e siècle," (1935) in Dupront, *Genèses des temps modernes: Rome, les réformes et le nouveau monde: Textes réunis et présentés par Dominique Julia et Philippe Boutry* (Paris, 2001), cited in Romain Descendre, *L'état du monde: Giovanni Botero entre raison d'État et géopolitique* (Geneva, 2009), 35.

⁷ A new translation of *Delle cause della grandezza e magnificenza delle città* has recently appeared: *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Symcox (Toronto, 2014).

Introduction

to relocate elsewhere. *On the Causes of the Greatness and Magnificence of Cities* also revealed Botero's interest in areas beyond Europe, especially China. He shared with many of his contemporaries the utopian view of the Chinese Empire, which provided order and prosperity for its population of 60 million which far outstripped the most populous European state, France with its roughly 15 million people.

The Universal Relations was a compendium of contemporary knowledge about the known world rather than a creative effort like *The Reason of State*.⁸ It may have originated as a response to a request from Borromeo for a description of the state of Christianity worldwide. The volumes represented a vast mine of information about the known world, physical, geographical, anthropological, economic, political, and religious. Of particular importance was the attempt to accumulate positive data, and the interest in numbers contributed to the development of an early science of statistics. Botero surpassed Jean Bodin in his emphasis on the influence of climate and geography on history. Many travel accounts as well as reports from missionaries in the field available in Rome served as his sources. The first edition of all the parts of *The Universal Relations* was published at Bergamo in 1596, and the whole and various parts went through over sixty editions and translations into Latin (1596), German (1596), English (1601), Spanish (1603), and Polish (1609).

The *Relations* included many digressions on topics treated in *The Reason of State* and modifications of Botero's thought, generally in the direction of a greater unity of Christendom. He came explicitly to embrace positions close to Robert Bellarmine's on the *Respublica Christiana*, characterized by indirect papal authority in temporal affairs. He acknowledged a new preference for a great empire like the Spanish over the medium-sized state he had favored in *The Reason of State* largely because it better facilitated the conditions for the effective preaching of the Gospel. Now he praised the Spanish expulsion of the Jews and Moors in 1492, for which he saw God rewarding the Spaniards with the conquest of the New World. He had shown little enthusiasm for these measures in *The Reason of State*, where he considered them from an economic perspective.

The Reason of State derived from three related traditions: the medieval "mirror of princes" tradition, the Scholastic, and the Florentine. It

⁸ The first modern edition of *The Universal Relations* has just appeared: *Le relazioni universali*, ed. Blythe Alice Raviola, 2 vols. (Turin, 2015).

Introduction

represented a modernized, updated version of the “mirror of princes” inasmuch as it laid out a program of successful rule based loosely on Christian moral virtues. Botero focused on the means to effective princely rule. Only with the edition of 1596 was a definition of the state as “a firm rule over people” inserted at the start of the first chapter, this in response to criticism that he had not defined the state. He wrote primarily from the perspective of the contemporary, medium-sized Italian states, especially those that had initially grown out of an urban base like Tuscany, Venice, or the Papal States rather than those like his native Savoy which had been princely territorial states from the start. This was neither a juridical work à la Bodin nor was it a work of political philosophy. There was little attempt to define the state further, to discuss the origins of the state, or to evaluate the circumstances that might justify rebellion. Nor did Botero discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the different forms of government or the constitutional structure of the state.

Botero and other Antimachiavellian writers usually treated in a cursory fashion these issues of political philosophy and the theological and metaphysical arguments to the effect that Machiavelli was unchristian and immoral. One exception was the usual support of princely absolutism, which was a response to the civil conflicts of the time just as it was for Bodin; Botero had experienced them personally in France. The restraints he placed upon the ruler were moral not constitutional, though he warned the prince of his need for popular support and so introduced a democratic element. Yet Botero esteemed republics. Venice was frequently noted in *The Reason of State* for its love of liberty. For his political philosophy he generally assumed the position of contemporary Scholastic authors who on a more theoretical level were involved in adapting the church to the growth of the modern state. Among these, three of the most prominent were the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria who taught at Salamanca from 1526 until his death in 1546, the Spaniard Francisco Suarez who taught in Rome from 1580 until 1585 though he did not begin to publish until later, and Robert Bellarmine who taught in Rome from 1576 until 1588 when he became consultant to the Roman curia and then a cardinal. All three of them accepted the modern sovereign state along with the indirect power of the papacy in temporal affairs which could be invoked when a government took measures harmful to the salvation of souls. They discussed the origin of the state, the role of consent within the state, and the requirements for a just war. All in all, they attempted

Introduction

to adapt the church to the changing times but on a level different from Botero and the Antimachiavellians.

The Florentine political tradition served as another major source for Botero. First of all in this regard comes Machiavelli himself. Though writing against “the Florentine chancellor,” he took over many of his ideas and much of his vocabulary. Botero argued from historical examples much as did Machiavelli and Bodin, and he frequently called to the bar the ancient writers, especially the Romans but also the Greeks, as Renaissance writers were wont to do. Despite his assignment of Tacitus to a place alongside Machiavelli – Botero was in fact the first writer to link the two – he cited Tacitus seventy-three times, while Livy, the next in line, has fifty-six citations.⁹ No Scholastics were cited, nor were any other Renaissance historians except Polydore Vergil, who was cited once. But these figures are deceptive. Botero used many examples, historical and contemporary, as we have seen, drawing upon the many sources available to him in Rome, including Muslim and Byzantine ones, without naming them, and these were balanced more or less evenly between the ancient world and more recent history, that is, the Renaissance and the sixteenth century. He also frequently alluded to medieval events.

Botero’s use of the term “reason of state” was much more positive and more general than the usage of most of his contemporaries. For many of them it meant, as he himself noted with a certain vagueness, “those things which cannot be reduced to an ordinary or common reason.”¹⁰ This was the case with Scipione Ammirato, for example, where reason of state indicated the necessity to bypass, for the sake of the common good, common practice or positive law but not natural or divine law.¹¹ Others, like the satirical republican Traiano Boccalini in his *Reports from Parnassus* (1612), considered it “a law useful to states but in everything contrary to the laws of God and of men.”¹²

Botero was interested in the conservation, then the expansion of the state; he had scarcely anything to say about its foundation. Certainly in the *Discourses*, Machiavelli’s chief concern had been the preservation of the state in a hostile environment and against the ravages of time. Botero

⁹ This figure applies to *RS* 1598.

¹⁰ *RS*, 1.1 (p. 4), see note 2. Botero added this in *RS* 1596 in response to criticism.

¹¹ *Discorso sopra C. Tacito* (Florence, 1594), book 12, chap. 1 (pp. 228–42).

¹² *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, book 2, ragguaglio (report) 87, p. 290.

Introduction

nourished few illusions about the environment. In discussing prudence he introduced the concept of princely interest (*interesse*) or advantage, contrasting it with friendship, blood relationship, obligations to allies, or any other bond. To the ruler he made it clear that “in the deliberations of princes interest is that which overcomes every other consideration.”¹³ To preserve a state was a greater achievement than to found one, precisely because of the variability of things human. A ruler often gained power by accident or force, he wrote, sounding like Machiavelli, “but the retention of what has been acquired was the fruit of an excellent *virtù*,” and called for great wisdom. The Spartan custom of punishing those who in the fight lost their shields not their swords showed their esteem for preservation.¹⁴ His predilection for medium-sized states showed that for Botero it was not a question of conquest and glory or mediocrity and probable extinction, as Machiavelli seemed to argue in the *Discourses*. Botero distinguished, formally, between maintenance and expansion; he devoted the first six books of *The Reason of State* to maintenance and the last four to expansion. The purpose behind his distinction was to show that within a Christian, moral framework it was possible for a prince to enlarge his medium-sized state and so to gather the resultant glory. Botero forged a new concept of expansion that had much less to do with military conquest than Machiavelli’s.

Botero’s understanding of virtue or *virtù*, reputation, and power, and the relationship among them characterized his thought and that of other Antimachiavellians, and it provides a key to the political culture of the Counter-Reformation and the Baroque. The Spanish council of state reminded Philip III in 1616 when war threatened in Italy that “religion and reputation ... are the two great matters which sustain states,” and there could be no compromise on them.¹⁵ Reputation played a significant role in the policy-making of Olivares and Richelieu, and *réputation* and *puissance* turned up frequently in the cardinal’s *Political Testament*, where *prudence* or *raison* frequently replaced the more general *vertu*.

Both Machiavelli and Botero featured the role of the ruler’s *virtù*; for both, it constituted a congeries of qualities that enabled him to gain and retain the support of his people. But Botero reunited Christian moral virtue with the political skill of Machiavelli’s *virtù*.¹⁶ The ruler of *virtù*

¹³ *RS*, 2.6 (p. 41); see also 8.14 (p. 149). ¹⁴ *RS*, 1.5 (p. 7).

¹⁵ Cited in Geoffrey Parker, *Europe in Crisis, 1598–1648* (Glasgow, 1979), 156.

¹⁶ Machiavelli also at times included moral virtue in his concept of *virtù*.

Introduction

was both virtuous and virtuoso. *Virtù* produced reputation, understood as the support of the people, and reputation made up the basic element in the ruler's power, which then in turn augmented his reputation. Immoral conduct as well as political ineptitude – the two nearly overlapped for Botero – subverted his power by undermining his reputation. *Potenza* for power did not figure nearly as much in Botero's vocabulary as did *virtù* or *riputazione*, but the reality was as central to his thinking as they were.

Botero devoted most of Book One of *The Reason of State* to princely *virtù*, including justice and liberality, and Book Two to its vital components, prudence and valor, temperance and religion. Books Three to Six then developed further techniques of government for dealing with particular classes or groups of people, including heretics, infidels, and foreigners. With Book Seven he began his discussion of the state's expansion that filled the last four books. It revolved around “the instruments of prudence and valor,” or *virtù*, the tools of expansion. These came to be the prince's resources (*forze*), which he reduced to “people (*gente*), many and of high quality, and money and food supplies and munitions and horses and offensive and defensive arms”;¹⁷ they too were basic features of his power and likewise a source of reputation.

A prince could not rule successfully for any length of time without the support of his people. It consisted in their love (*affezione*) for him and his reputation (*riputazione* or *stima*) among them. These were “the foundation of every government of a state.”¹⁸ So Botero introduced a non-juridical form of consent into government; he incorporated the democratic element in princely rule found in Machiavelli, and the role of consent insisted on by Scholastic authors. Benefits and moderate *virtù* could elicit the love of the people but only outstanding *virtù* displayed in matters vital to the people could evoke reputation. These Botero summed up as “abundance, peace, and justice,” terms which included much of the traditional concept of the common good. People could not but be content “who without fear of foreign or civil war, who without fear of being assassinated in their houses through violence or fraud, who have the necessary food at a good price are not concerned about anything else.”¹⁹ The

¹⁷ *RS*, 7.1 (p. 121) Botero uses the term “*forze*” in two different ways: sometimes it designates military resources and sometimes resources more generally. The same is true of “*gente*”: sometimes it designates soldiers and at other times people or population. The meaning has to be drawn from the context. Here it would seem to mean soldiers.

¹⁸ *RS*, 3.1 (p. 71). ¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Introduction

prince who fulfilled his obligation to provide for the common good would enjoy his people's support. Good government was good politics because it helped secure reputation.

Botero elaborated on his concept of reputation in the *Additions to the Reason of State* (*Aggiunte alla ragion di stato*), which was first published separately in 1598 and often with later editions of *The Reason of State*. He did not directly address its role in a ruler's foreign relations, yet the reputation or support that he enjoyed among his subjects clearly influenced his international standing. Reputation now amounted to a composite of love and fear that his subjects felt toward him; it was similar to the reverence that was engendered by a holy person. It designated awe and wonder elicited by the ruler's *virtù*, which "have the quality of the lofty and the admirable and elevate the prince above the earth and carry him beyond the number of common men."²⁰ An element of mystery enshrouded the prince which his subjects could not fathom.

Which was more important in reputation, Botero now asked, love or fear? Siding with Machiavelli and in opposition to the tradition of the "mirror of princes" tradition, with a certain sadness, he came down on the side of fear. Given the world as it was, no government was more unstable than one based on love. To satisfy all his subjects and unite thousands in love of himself was a nearly impossible task for a prince. Subjects murmured and longed for change. The subjection that followed from fear was necessary. Moreover, it lay within his power for a prince to create fear in his subjects, whereas to elicit love often exceeded his powers. But fear was a far cry from hatred, Botero warned, as had Machiavelli and Aristotle long before him. Hatred as well as contempt quickly undermined government and had to be avoided at all costs.

Reputation had to be based on genuine virtue. Here his response to Machiavelli led him into the favorite Baroque topic of the relationship between appearance and reality. Feigned virtue would not long convince. A prince simply could not counterfeit piety over a long period as Machiavelli recommended. Botero distinguished three types of reputation: natural, which actually corresponded to the *virtù* of the prince; artificial, which resulted from conscious exaggeration of his *virtù*; and adventitious, which exaggerated the prince's reputation but was not caused by a conscious attempt to do so. Neither of the second two would last, and they could lead to trouble. The Venetians had executed the condottiere

²⁰ *Additions*, Appendix D, 4 (pp. 223–24).

Introduction

Carmagnola because he failed to win a battle that his reputation led them to think that he should have won.

But a prince could and should polish his image. It was a fault if his reputation fell short of what he deserved. A ruler might improve his standing by, for example, hiding his weaknesses or assigning unpopular duties to others. A prince's image was similar to a painting. Just as a painter might exceed the limits of truth so long as he remained within those of verisimilitude, so might the prince in fostering his image, wrote Botero, drawing on contemporary art theory. But a reputation that endured had to be rooted in reality; appearance was never enough.²¹

The prince gained the love of his subjects especially by justice and liberality, the virtues "which are totally aimed to benefit [others]."²² Botero discussed two forms of justice distinguished by Aristotle and usually treated by the Scholastics: distributive, which dealt with the fair distribution of honors and burdens in the state, and commutative, which protected the subjects from violence and fraud at the hands of one another. They had to be present in those areas where the hand of government most touched the lives of subjects, in the collection of taxes and the administration of justice where the people desired above all fairness and speed. Botero criticized the sale of offices: "this is nothing other than to promote avarice rather than justice to tribunals," he wrote.²³ The prince should pay judges well and prohibit them from accepting any gifts. Botero praised the way the Chinese prepared their officials, and he lauded the system of spies used by Cosimo de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, to check on his judges.

Liberality aimed at two goals, relief for the poor and patronage of the arts. No work was more praised in Scripture than assistance of the unfortunate, nor was there "anything more suited to and effective to win over the minds of the populace and to bind them to their lord."²⁴ The good and the useful were in harmony. The prince should demonstrate his concern especially at times of natural disasters such as earthquakes. Here Botero added the Machiavellian advice that at the time of such calamities the ruler ought not permit any private person to become too prominent in the aid effort since this easily led to a popularity with the people that might prove threatening to the government. So the Gracchi brothers had created a party in ancient Rome. Secondly, the ruler should exercise

²¹ Ibid., 4 (p. 223).

²² RS, 1.11 (p. 17).

²³ RS, 1.16 (p. 23).

²⁴ RS, 1.20 (p. 30).

Introduction

liberality by fostering the *virtù* of subjects, that is, their literary and artistic abilities. The ruler ought to patronize the arts and sciences, as many contemporary princes did, thus attaching prominent personalities to the state. Nor did Botero fail to add the admonition that the prince should not be so liberal with his gifts that he notably increased the tax burden on the population, and so provoked discontent, a point also made by Machiavelli.

Prudence and valor made up the leading components of *virtù*; they were the source of reputation, “the two pillars on which every government ought to rest,”²⁵ he wrote at the start of Book Two. Prudence was of the eye, corresponding to Machiavelli’s fox, valor of the hand, corresponding to Machiavelli’s lion. The overwhelming amount of space given to prudence in *The Reason of State* indicated that the eye was more important than the hand, and prudence soon became for the Antimachiavellians the cardinal virtue of the ruler or politician, combining moral virtue with political skill as it had long done in the Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions. Prudence was acquired above all by experience. A major part of a prince’s or statesman’s education was the study of history, for Botero as for Machiavelli. It was “the most vast theater that one can imagine.”²⁶ Botero then turned to an idea that he took from Bodin which he elaborated much more fully in *The Universal Relations*. Peoples were different. Geography and climate greatly affected their character. Those who inhabited mountainous areas, for example, tended to be fierce and wild, those who dwelt in valleys tended to be soft and even effeminate. The ruler had to acquire an understanding of his own and other peoples. So Botero began to think in terms of an individualized reason of state or means to construct and maintain a state, adapted to the population and situation of particular states. Thus he helped to prepare the way for further thinking about reason of state in terms of the interests of particular states.

Under prudence Botero then listed a number of precepts or maxims, “headings of prudence (*capi di prudenza*),” that are impossible to summarize but were of great importance for his political outlook. Many have a Machiavellian ring and reveal a pessimistic vision of the world but they never recommend clearly immoral actions. Reference has already been made to the first of them, that interest always prevailed in the deliberations of princes. The prince should never trust anyone whom he had

²⁵ *RS*, 2.1 (p. 34). ²⁶ *RS*, 2.3 (p. 37).

Introduction

offended or who felt himself to have been offended by him. The desire for revenge remained latent and came to the surface when opportunity beckoned. Botero urged princes not to go to war with powerful republics unless victory was certain. “The love of liberty is so powerful and has such roots in those who have enjoyed it for a while that to conquer it and to extirpate it is nearly impossible, and the enterprises and counsels of princes die with them but the designs and deliberations of free cities are as it were immortal,”²⁷ he wrote, sounding much like the republican Machiavelli.

For Botero as for Machiavelli a sense of timing was fundamental in politics. Philip II of Spain exemplified the prudent ruler who refused to yield to the whim of chance or fortune. A prince had to know when to act. “Nothing is of greater importance than a certain period of time which is called opportunity (*opportunità*); it is nothing other than a combination of circumstances that facilitates an endeavour that before or after that point would be difficult.”²⁸ As for Machiavelli, a ruler had to know when to take advantage of the occasion (*occasione*), a term used elsewhere by Botero in a similar context and divorced from any connection with fortune. Botero warned also about sudden change, “because such actions have something of the violent, and violence rarely succeeds and never produces a lasting effect.”²⁹ Especially at the start of his reign, a prince ought to be slow to make changes. When they are necessary, they ought to be made after the example of nature, which does not move directly between summer and winter but passes through the intermediate phases of fall and spring. Charles Martel had demonstrated how to do this by the way he prepared his son to succeed to the Carolingian throne.

Fidelity to treaties and agreements belonged to prudence and was an essential element in a ruler’s reputation. His outstanding example of this was Alexander Farnese, duke of Parma, governor of the Netherlands, and commander of Philip II’s army there from 1578 to 1592, who successfully tamed the Dutch rebels and who seemed to serve, consciously or unconsciously, as Botero’s counterpart to Cesare Borgia. A ruler ought not to make promises that he could not keep; this also undermined confidence. Elsewhere Botero insisted that a ruler had to remain faithful to the terms on which another people had submitted to him. Any other way of proceeding would stir fears and cause trouble. It was counterproductive to

²⁷ RS, 2.6 (p. 44). ²⁸ RS, 2.6 (p. 45). ²⁹ RS, 2.6 (p. 43).

Introduction

build on any other basis than truth and fidelity to one's word. But Botero failed to supply any guidance regarding when newly perceived interests might allow a ruler to abandon an agreement. The Scholastics had shown flexibility in this regard.

Botero devoted much less space to valor or *valore*, the second source of reputation. He sometimes used the term *valore* nearly as a synonym for *virtù*, blurring the line between prudence and valor. More narrowly, valor meant boldness or *ardire*. Together with prudence it brought forth "marvelous deeds."³⁰ Their common achievement was that they won subjects' attention and harnessed their energies either by exciting their wonder and awe at the prince's undertakings or by keeping them occupied and so preventing them from causing trouble. A prince ought never to risk a venture that was not certain to result in success with honor nor undertake projects of little importance that were unlikely to magnify his reputation. Something "lofty and heroic" ought to characterize all his deeds.³¹ Two types of deed were the military and the civil, with the former of greater importance. The civil comprised building projects of grand scale or marvelous utility, like the aqueducts, bridges, and roads of the Romans or the Propylaeum of Pericles in Athens. So Botero appeared to endorse the construction projects of Sixtus V in Rome. One was the completion of the aqueduct still called *Acque Felice* that channeled water to Rome from 20 kilometers east of the city, and another a new configuration of the city's streets.

Gradually, then, Botero's perspective shifted from the magnificence of the projects themselves to their ability to keep the people occupied; by people he now meant principally the growing urban population and especially the urban poor who were by nature unstable and eager for change. He envisaged the capital cities, first Rome, then Paris, Madrid, and others where a restive population had to be controlled. Pope Sixtus's building program provided work for many in Rome. In one passage Botero showed an uncharacteristic support for war. He seemed to endorse Machiavelli's traditional view that foreign war was useful to maintain peace at home, and he explained the domestic peace enjoyed by Spaniards and Turks partly by their engagement in foreign wars. For Christians there were always the Turks, the traditional enemy against whom they could always make war legitimately, as he was later to elaborate at the end of *The Reason of State*. Botero considered the popular entertainments provided by

³⁰ *RS*, 2.10 (p. 51). ³¹ *RS*, 2.11 (p. 56).

Introduction

the Medici in Florence suitable to distract the people. They should educate as well as entertain. Botero was highly critical of the contemporary theatre, but he praised the ecclesiastical pageants staged by Carlo Borromeo in Milan. “In short, it is necessary to do this in such a way that the people have some occupation, pleasurable or useful, at home or abroad, that engages them and so keeps them from impertinent actions and evil thoughts.”³²

Botero subsequently divided the population into three groups: the nobles or the wealthy (*grandi, opulenti*), the middling sort (*mezani*), and the poor (*poveri, miseri*). He quickly dismissed the middling sort as a peaceful lot who posed no threat and turned to the other two who did. We have already seen recommendations for handling the urban poor. At this point he anticipated his program for economic development by showing that the poor needed to be provided opportunities in agriculture and in the crafts so that they would have a stake in the state. Among the nobles three groups could be dangerous: princes of the blood, great feudal lords, and those who stood out by their valor. Botero was concerned about the threat to the prince from the overmighty subject, a threat that the wars in France had led him to realize. The prince ought not to create offices with excessive authority and should suppress existing ones like the Great Constable of France. Rulers should avoid granting offices in perpetuity like the governorships in France, so that incumbents could be removed. There should be a clear distinction between members of the king’s council who possessed no jurisdiction and officers with jurisdiction such as governors, generals, and captains of major fortresses. Ferdinand the Catholic, Botero remarked, never appointed the general who conquered a province to be its governor.

The last pair of virtues that constituted *virtù* was temperance and religion, upholding the others and so preserving the state. They were needed in the people as well as in the prince. Religion was the mother of virtues, temperance the wet-nurse. For Botero religion was valuable because of the divine aid that it won for the state and for the virtues that it fostered in the subjects, especially obedience. Like Machiavelli, he played up the importance attached to religion by the Romans, who undertook no campaign without first consulting the augurs and seeking the favour of the gods. Like the Carolingians and the Capetians before them, the

³² *RS*, 3.3. This citation does not appear in the 1589 edition; it was added in *RS* 1596; see the Firpo edition of 1948, p. 153.

Introduction

Habsburgs owed their prominence to their piety. Botero recounted a tale already a part of Habsburg lore. Back in the thirteenth century, Count Rudolf of Habsburg assisted a priest bringing Viaticum to a peasant in the midst of a violent storm. The house's subsequent good fortune resulted from the blessing of the grateful priest. God rewarded princely piety.

"Religion is of such power for government that without it every other foundation of the state wobbles," Botero declared as he turned to the subjects.³³ The ruler must foster their piety. Religion was useful to the prince in many ways. It inspired courage in battle, civic responsibility, and a spirit of obedience. According to Christian teaching, all authority came from God. Christians were bound in conscience to obey even unworthy rulers except in the case when a command clearly contravened the law of God, and even then, Botero continued – coming as close to a discussion of the right of resistance as he ever did – a clear break with the ruler ought to be the last resort. Under the Roman persecutions Christians had demonstrated patience and long-suffering. At present, Botero contended, Catholics endured patiently their trials in France, the Netherlands, England, and Scotland, whereas the Protestants inclined to rebellion; he overlooked the role of the Catholic League in France. Christianity and specifically Catholicism served as a bulwark of the state despite Machiavelli's charges to the contrary.

His apparent opposition to the growing interference of rulers in ecclesiastical affairs did not keep Botero from conceding to the prince a major role in church matters. His assignment to the prince of responsibilities for religion opened the door for an expansion of the state's activity that was typical of the Counter-Reformation as well as the Reformation. Indeed, the growing role of government was as important to the development of the state as was a standing army or a nascent bureaucracy. Botero proposed a program of reform and Counter-Reformation. The prince should provide an example to his people by genuinely and intelligently practising his faith, avoiding pretence and superstition. He should make sure that the people were provided with qualified pastors and preachers, that suitable churches were available, and that the material needs of the clergy were cared for.

Botero was wary of excessive wealth, as the republican Machiavelli had been, who had seen it as weakening civic loyalty. In the name of temperance Botero advocated luxury taxes and sumptuary laws regulating

³³ *RS*, 2.16 (p. 64).