

Vickie B. Sullivan. *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism in England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. x + 284 pp. \$75.00. Review by SIMON KOW, UNIVERSITY OF KING'S COLLEGE.

Vickie B. Sullivan attempts to counter readings of early modern republicanism as a strain of modern thought opposed to that of liberalism. For example, J.G.A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner have both argued that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century republican writers drew heavily from Machiavelli's works, and in turn developed civic humanist ideas which were to influence the founding fathers of the United States. Thus, classical republicanism should for these scholars be seen as a countervailing intellectual tradition in America to the liberalism of thinkers such as Locke. Sullivan contends that liberalism and republicanism should not be regarded as opposed. Instead, English republican thinkers combined the republicanism of Machiavelli with the liberalism implicit in the thought of Hobbes (and fully realized in Lockean political thought). She devotes the first part of the book to the ideas of Machiavelli and Hobbes, stressing that despite the differences between the two thinkers concerning their evaluations of war and peace as well as of pride and ambition in politics, there are common elements which tend to be emphasized by several English republican writers: the fundamentally passionate nature of human beings, and an instrumentalist conception of politics as serving to satisfy the passions. In the second part, she turns to the writings of Marchamont Nedham, James Harrington, Henry Neville, Algernon Sidney, and Cato—the pseudonym of John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon—to show that each of these writers were influenced by both Machiavelli and Hobbes in various ways. The liberal and republican tendencies are often in tension, but Cato's thought can be regarded as “the final synthesis of Machiavellian republicanism with Lockean liberalism” (228).

Sullivan's detailed discussion is a useful reminder of the difficulty in separating republican from liberal elements of early modern English political thought. English republican writers were

often as concerned with protecting property rights and fostering commerce as they were with resurrecting classical sources in their struggles against the monarchy. Sullivan is surely right to emphasize the characteristically modern preoccupations of such thinkers. Nevertheless, the work suffers from the tendency, epitomized by the writings of Leo Strauss and his followers (which she frequently cites), to simplify and de-contextualize early modern thought. Indeed, Sullivan shares their view that modernity is a monolithic intellectual project, thus eroding the fundamental theoretical and contextual differences between modern thinkers. For example, her chapter on Machiavelli omits virtually any discussion of his conception of fortune, while her treatment of Hobbes does not address his mechanistic and materialist account of nature. These foundational chapters thus neglect the profound historical and metaphysical gulf separating the instability of Machiavelli's Italy from Hobbes's quest for scientific certainty amidst the British civil wars. Moreover, she characterizes Machiavelli and Hobbes as theorists who broke from the Aristotelian concern with moral education because they both thought that "fear of punishment is the best motivator of human beings" (107). This caricature of noble ancients and nasty moderns is objectionable in several respects: it underplays Aristotle's recognition in his *Politics* of the fundamental need for coercion, overlooks Machiavelli's preference for republican virtue to the use of fear necessitated by corrupt regimes (a preference which she dismisses as disingenuous), and contradicts Hobbes's assertion in chapter 30 of *Leviathan* that the rights of sovereignty must be "diligently, and truly taught; because they cannot be maintained by any Civill Law, or terrour of legall punishment."

Her reading of English republicans is similarly flawed. Each of the chapters in the second part consists of laboured comparisons between English republican writings and the thought of Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke. She appears to subscribe to a view of intellectual history as dominated by the influences of great thinkers in arguing, for example, that Nedham's republicanism draws upon a "Machiavelli transformed for liberal purposes" (116), or that for Cato, "liberty—a liberty that is largely Lockean—must be

sustained with a Machiavellian spirit" (257). She also concludes the second part with a sketch of the "modern philosophic and scientific project" (260) spearheaded by Machiavelli, Descartes, and Hobbes to reinterpret Christianity. Yet, she acknowledges in a footnote in her chapter on Nedham that he cites Salmasius and Grotius as well as Hobbes (116, n.14), and so the reader is left wondering about the validity of an analysis of English republicans which centres so much on canonical texts and lumps them together in a single package.

The preoccupation with the influence solely of canonical thinkers is not the only anachronistic feature of her interpretation. Under the sway of Strauss's esoteric reading of Machiavelli, Sullivan maintains that Neville embraced the "vehement anticlericism of the Florentine" (190), who mischievously sought to "transform Christianity to permit it to serve as a resource for his political purposes" (263). Machiavelli was no fan of the conduct of the Catholic Church in his time, but his political writings show little interest in Christian theology. Sullivan's reading thus stems from the Straussian view that Machiavelli's silence on such matters reveals to the careful reader his project to undermine Christianity with a new philosophical teaching—an ambitious claim wholly unsupported by textual or historical evidence. Indeed, she goes so far as to attribute to the English republicans the art of esoteric writing. For example, Nedham reports Machiavelli's view that "not he that placeth a virtuous government in his own hands or family and governs well during his natural life, but he that establisheth a lasting form for the people's constant security is most to be commended," and cites *Discourses on Livy* 2.11 (which Nedham's modern editor corrects as 1.11) as his source. Sullivan contends that neither chapter of the *Discourses* contains the statement cited by Nedham, because he deliberately softened Machiavelli's teaching to make it compatible with a liberal concern for the security of the people (125). In fact, Nedham's assertion is correctly drawn from 1.11 of the *Discourses*, where Machiavelli writes that "it is the safety of a republic or a kingdom to have not one prince who governs prudently while he lives, but one individual who orders it so that it

is also maintained when he dies." There may be subtle differences between Machiavelli's words and Nedham's paraphrase, but the citation is surely intended to be faithful and not a conscious revision of Machiavelli's thought.

Most alarmingly, Sullivan fails to note the religious influences on American political thought. To argue that English liberal republicanism influenced the founding fathers requires that the puritan elements, for example, in the thought of Locke and the English republicans be considered. In turn, such considerations would cast doubt on the connections she makes between these writers and Hobbes, who was vehemently opposed to radical Protestantism. The assumption underlying these lacunae in her account—that liberalism and liberal republicanism are self-consciously and unambiguously hostile to revealed religion—explains her decision "not to treat John Milton...who was a very prominent republican during the Civil Wars...[because] ultimately his thought is too deeply embedded in biblical revelation to qualify as a precursor to liberal thought" (9, n.19). One is led to conclude that Sullivan is extremely selective in her choice of thinkers and topics in order to justify an ideological caricature of modernity.

Robert Bireley. *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. xii + 330 pp. + 10 illus. + 1 map. \$65.00. Review by MARK CHARLES FISSEL, THE AUGUSTA ARSENAL.

In *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War*, Robert Bireley constructs a narrative of the Jesuits' activities in church-state politics, diplomacy, and strategic decision-making in the period 1618-1648. He ventures into the four most important Catholic courts of Europe: Vienna, Munich, Paris, and Madrid. Using original manuscript sources Bireley interprets the activities of members of the Society of Jesus collectively and individually. He provides background and analysis that is both chronological and geographical in scope. The author then lays bare the influence of individual Jesuits (particularly confessors) at Catholic courts. Bireley man-