

Publishing *The Prince*

PUBLISHING  
*The Prince*

HISTORY, READING, &  
THE BIRTH OF POLITICAL CRITICISM

*Jacob Soll*

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*To J. H. M. Salmon*



Fig. 1. Abraham-Nicolas Amelot de La Houssaye's translation of Machiavelli's *The Prince* (Amsterdam: Henry Wetstein, 1684), frontispiece (a) and title page (b). This edition of *The Prince* was

L E  
P R I N C E  
D E N I C O L A S  
M A C H I A V E L,  
C I T O I E N E T S E C R E T A I R E  
D E F L O R E N C E.

*Traduit & Commenté par*  
*A. N. A M E L O T.*  
*Sieur de la Houssaie.*



A A M S T E R D A M,  
C h e z H E N R Y W E T S T E I N . 1 6 8 4 .

## *Acknowledgments*

**B**ehind every book is a history. This book began in Paris in 1991, in Roger Chartier's old office at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme on the boulevard Raspail. Roger first suggested that I look at Amelot de La Houssaye's translation of *L'Homme de cour*. I looked into its pages, followed its references, and began a long voyage of scholarship. Roger has worked on this project with me ever since, and my debt to him is grand. Indeed, this book is in many ways his. He and Christian Jouhaud sent me to work at the Bibliothèque Nationale, where Christian suggested that I do a "material bibliography" of the works of Amelot, thus providing the project an analytical framework. Christian has given much inspiration, tough criticism, and useful advice, as has his seminar at the Groupe de Recherches Interdisciplinaire sur l'Histoire du Littéraire at the Centre de Recherches Historiques, *haut lieu d'érudition*. Daniel Roche has been a constant friend and teacher. His seminar at the rue d'Ulm was the basis of my graduate education. Many thanks are due to Robert Descimon, who first took me to the Archives Nationales on the hunt for Amelot and has ever since been a source of guidance. Annie Parent-Charron took the time to read my work, give me valuable advice, and publish my first article in the venerable *Bulletin du Bibliophile*. For this, I will always be grateful. Many thanks also go to François Moureau, great erudite and patron; Pierre-François Burger, my first real reader; André Gunthert, my original friend and teacher in Paris; Diogo Ramado Curto, my teacher, friend, guide, and patron in the early days between Paris and Lisbon; and Marc Fumaroli and his seminar at the Collège de France.

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I first met Anthony Grafton in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Due to his friendship and mentoring I moved to Princeton where I continued working on this project while teaching as a lecturer. Much of the form and content of this book come from long conversations with him—part Talmudic master, part Erasmus, part Lipsius—and reflects his influence as a reader and teacher. His seminar on humanist rhetoric and those who took part in it inspired and gave shape to this book. I would neither have written this book, nor had the possibility to pursue my academic career without his support. I hope my footnotes are an ample reflection of my admiration and gratitude. Between precepts at a lunch at Palmer House, Ted Rabb explained how to turn my dissertation into a book. This book thus bears his strong mark. He has worked tirelessly ever since, reading versions of the manuscript and giving valuable, frank advice and much support. I am grateful for long talks with Peter Gordon that did much to help formulate the framework of the first chapter. I thank Robert Darnton for his advice, comradeship, and confidence; thanks also go to the Princeton History Department and especially to Judy Hansen.

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final draft, and with clear reference to Amelot de La Houssaye, filled the margins of his copy with dozens of manuscript notes: corrections, additions, and most of all, a Tacitean erudite commentary. Needless to say, I would have liked to have published my book with his annotations in the margins, but publishing practices have changed since the seventeenth century, and thus the Pocock hand-annotated edition will remain a private tool of historical analysis and personal development.

None of this project could have been done without the libraries and librarians who provided their support and learning. At the old Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the reference librarians were my first research instructors, and librarians in the Réserve des livres rares and the Salle des Manuscrits, such as Isabelle de Conihout, acted daily as teachers, helping me track down and, in many cases, interpret the books and documents I used for this project. For years I researched this book at the old site at the rue de Richelieu—it is fundamentally a product of that place, and I shall always miss working under its beautiful arches and ceilings. I owe debts to the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, the Bibliothèque Mazarine, the Archives Nationales, and the Bibliothèque de l’Institut. The University Library at Cambridge is one of the grandest collections in the world, and working there with my cart of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books from the Acton and Peterborough collections was an utter pleasure. The Firestone Library at Princeton provided not only the wealth of its collections but also the wonderful experience of doing deep research in the stacks late into the night. Floors B and C have become a spiritual second home. Thanks also to the Rutgers University Library; to Susan Halpert at Harvard’s Houghton Library; and to John Pollock of the Rare Books Department at the University of Pennsylvania’s Van Pelt Library, who helped me research the final chapter of this book and provided most of its images. I am grateful for the financial support of Magdalene College, the Cambridge Overseas Research Fund, the Prince’s Trust, the Bibliographical Society, the Royal Historical Society, the Rutgers Research Council, and my department.

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