

A refreshing look at Machiavelli as a contemporary political thinker

Machiavelli's Daring. Philosophy for Free People

TINNEKE BEECKMAN

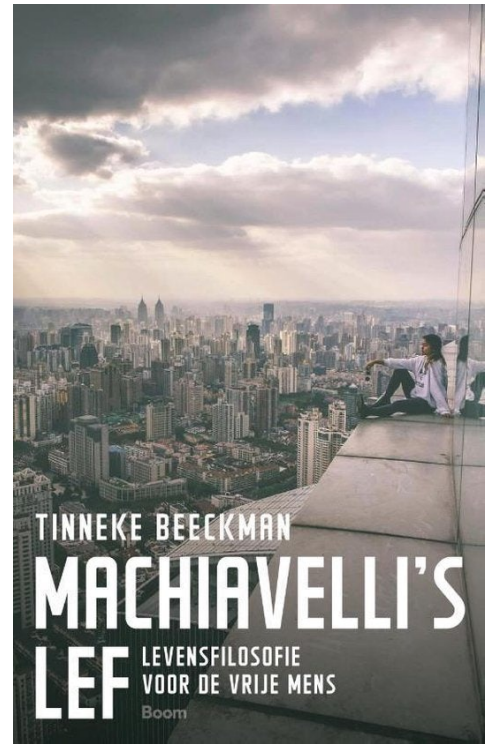
Why would anyone still read Machiavelli (1469-1527)? Doesn't his famous 'The end justifies the means' and the concept of 'Machiavellianism' that derives from it stand for manipulation, deceit and a lust for power? So Tinneke Beeckman herself initially thought. But through Spinoza she discovered a different Machiavelli in 'Discourses on Livy', a brilliant political thinker of the Renaissance and a passionate lover of freedom. Machiavelli is just the thinker a world in crisis needs. And his thinking, which was above all a reaction against the prevailing systems of his day, testifies to an infectious audacity both in propounding ideas and in taking action.

Beeckman discusses Machiavelli's original insights that are applicable today: politics turns on conflict; necessity and adversity bring out the best in us; political virtue is different from classic morality. Machiavelli held up a mirror to both leaders and citizens. What do power, authority and citizenship mean? When are we truly living in freedom? Five centuries on, these questions have lost none of their topicality.

In a challenging book, Beeckman leads the reader to the heart of Machiavelli's thinking and shows that his works are a rich treasure trove of wise, sharp and clearly formulated insights that can be of great importance for citizens today.

What a refreshing take on Machiavelli by Tinneke Beeckman

DE STANDAARD



AUTHOR



Belgian philosopher, lecturer and columnist Tinneke Beeckman (b. 1976) studied moral sciences and philosophy at the Vrije Universiteit in Brussels and the Université Libre de Bruxelles. In 2003 she gained her doctorate with a thesis about Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche. She has published works on figures including Freud, Nietzsche and Heidegger, and above all on Spinoza, with the acclaimed 'Door Spinoza's lens' (Through Spinoza's Lens, 2012), and 'Macht en onmacht. Een verkenning van de hedendaagse aanslag op de Verlichting' (Power and Powerlessness. An exploration of the contemporary attack on the Enlightenment, 2015).

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