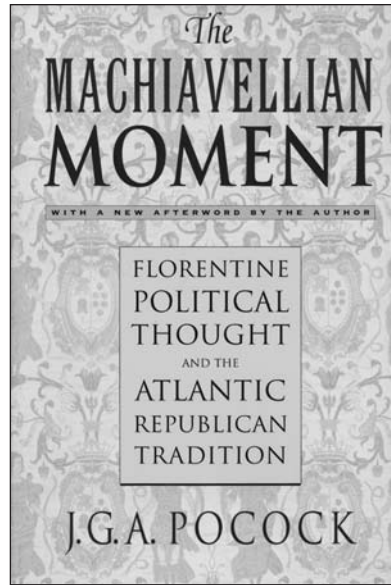


1975 *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*
([Click here to view our web site description.](#))
J.G.A. Pocock



This undisputed modern classic defies conventional categorization. The book's range is so wide and the number of debates it sparked in different disciplines so numerous that, as Philip

Pettit has written, it “gave historians and philosophers a generation’s work.” But some things are certain: *The Machiavellian Moment* has become an authoritative source for our understanding of the republican tradition and, in particular, its adversarial relationship to liberalism.

Pocock showed that, as Machiavelli sought to revive classical republican ideals, his prime concern was the moment when a new republic first confronts the problem of maintaining the stability of its ideals and institutions—the “Machiavellian moment” of the book’s title. After examining this problem in its sixteenth-century Italian context, Pocock took the bold and unexpected step of leaping forward to eighteenth-century America. He examined the anxieties of early American statesmen and citizens as they witnessed commercial expansion and feared for the imminent demise of their republic, and, in this Machiavellian moment, Pocock identified a language of civic virtue and civic humanism. The book has come to represent the so-called republican synthesis, which holds that America was born with a fear of corruption and a desire to promote classical virtue.

Soon after publication, Pocock’s arguments spawned furious debate among intellectual historians that spread to political philosophy and American history in general. Over time, *The Machiavellian Moment* has become a must-read book for anyone who wants to understand the intellectual origins of Western politics.