

## «Uno mero esecutore delle cose che li erano ordinate da Dio»: Tasso's Godfrey and Machiavelli's Moses

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**Abstract.** The essay analyzes the influence of the book of the *Exodus* on the representation of political relations between the Christian army and its captain, Godfrey of Bouillon, in Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. The research will show how Tasso's poem imitates the events of Moses in the government of the chosen people and reads the character of the prophet as a political leader who exercises sovereign power. This reading of Moses will be compared with the innovative one present in Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince*: the Machiavellian treatise presents the biblical prophet as a perfect example of a new prince who imposes his will even using weapons. The essay will highlight how the Machiavellian characterization of Moses influences the character of Tasso's poem. These considerations will highlight the political use of one of the major biblical characters within the most important poetic work of the Counter-Reformation period and the role of the most controversial political treatise of the time in this new reading.

**Keywords:** Torquato Tasso; Godfrey of Bouillon; Moses; *Exodus*; Niccolò Machiavelli; *The prince*.

## [es] «Uno mero esecutore delle cose che li erano ordinate da Dio»: el Godofredo de Tasso y el Moisés de Machiavelli

**Resumen.** El ensayo analiza la influencia del libro del *Éxodo* sobre la representación de las relaciones políticas entre el ejército cristiano y su capitán, Godofredo de Bouillón, en la *Gerusalemme liberata* de Torquato Tasso. La investigación pretende mostrar cómo el poema de Tasso imite los acontecimientos de Moisés en el gobierno del pueblo elegido, leyendo el personaje del profeta como un líder político que ejerce un poder soberano. Esta lectura de Moisés se confrontará con la innovadora presente en el *Príncipe* de Nicolás Maquiavelo: el tratado maquiavélico presenta al profeta bíblico como un ejemplo perfecto de príncipe nuevo que impone su voluntad incluso usando las armas. El ensayo destacará cómo la caracterización maquiavélica de Moisés influye en el personaje del poema de Tasso. Dichas consideraciones resaltarán el uso político de uno de los principales personajes bíblicos dentro de la más importante obra poética del período de la Contrarreforma y la función del más controvertido tratado político de la época en esta nueva lectura.

**Palabras clave:** Torquato Tasso; Godofredo de Bouillón; Moisés; *Éxodo*; Niccolò Machiavelli, *El príncipe*.

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The war stasis in the middle of which the narrative of the *Liberata* opens is dissolved by a resolute divine intervention, and God himself, presented as «Re del mondo», is the first *character* to utter a word in the poem, within the octave where he delegates the Archangel Gabriel to approach Godfrey and communicate to him what is both an order and an investiture:

Disse al suo nunzio Dio: – Goffredo trova,  
e in mio nome di' lui: perché si cessa?  
perché la guerra omai non si rinova  
a liberar Gierusalemme oppressa?  
Chiami i duci a consiglio, e i tardi mova  
a l'alta impresa: ei capitan fia d'essa.

Io qui l'eleggo; e 'l faran gli altri in terra,  
già suoi compagni, or suoi ministri in guerra?

To the disappointment of the character-God due to the prolonged blockage of the enterprise, they follow precise directives aimed at resolving the stalemate caused by the individualistic instances of the “Christian princes.” These directives converge in the exhortation to the “high enterprise” (thus waging war to retake Jerusalem), and this decisively stems from Godfrey being elected to lead the expedition. The Creator's initiative to send an angelic messenger to a chosen hero, urging him to undertake the enterprise, likely owes much to a similar scene in the first book

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<sup>2</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, ed. por Franco Tomasi (Milano: BUR, 2009), I, 12.

of *Italia liberata dai Goti*. In Trissino's poem, God sends the angel Onerio to Justinian, already "imperador del mondo," to announce the task desired by Heaven: the liberation of "Ausonia"<sup>3</sup>. The arrangement of the scene, as evidenced by the comparison of the texts, is remarkably similar. However, the significant originality of the eighth canto of Tasso's work lies in the explicit investiture of Godfrey, which is not canonically implied (as in the passage of *Italia liberata dai Goti*) but expressed openly in terms of a true election by God. This imparts a value to the element that goes beyond the mere function of a narrative device for "setting in motion" the story.

As Sergio Zatti points out, «il Dio cristiano che decreta dall'alto del suo soglio l'investitura di Goffredo a capo supremo dell'esercito crociato [...] mette definitivamente al bando, in nome dell'unitaria volontà epica, ogni pur nobile alterità romanzesca», so this «prologo in Cielo» can be considered «in una prospettiva obiettivamente antiaristotesca»<sup>4</sup>, at the same time, precisely because of this explicit and specific investiture, an additional connotation of the octave in question cannot escape: the choice of God is a political act, and it is therefore a political act to initiate the action of the poem. Let us clarify this aspect better: in the poem of Trissino there is no investiture of Justinian (which, as mentioned, is presented in *maiestas* condition as «imperador del mondo», his divine election has already taken place), but the assignment of a mission to be carried out in the name of God; in the *Liberata*, the «Re del mondo» Instead it must choose a man among many to whom to entrust a role of power, even before a business. Tasso's crusade lacks, in short, that political-military leader capable of fulfilling the divine will that the war against the Ostrogoths of the Trissino has already, and the choice is made, obviously, by God himself. The election of Godfrey is legitimized by the Old Testament model relating to the early kings of Israel, which sees Saul and David openly indicated by the deity as chosen rulers: «Cumque aspexisset Samuel Saulem, Dominus ait ei: "Ecce vir, quem dixeram tibi; iste dominabitur populo meo"»<sup>5</sup>, «Et ait Dominus: "Surge, unge eum; ipse est enim"»<sup>6</sup> (in reference to David).

More generally, the divine choice, which in the number of princes deliberately falls on Godfrey «perché egli è il solo fra tutti che davvero "scacciar desia / de la santa città gli empi pagani"»<sup>7</sup> and, therefore, the only one able to repress the centrifugal and selfish tendencies of the companions who delay victory, recalls the biblical ways in which God elects all the the leaders of the people of Israel: think, for example, of the patriarchs, whose choice, among the whole people, is made by virtue of their particular righteousness, almost always in opposition and in response to the subversive and deleterious thrusts of others, which would risk diverting the course of events from the celestial plane. In this sense, the close pacts with Noah and Abraham in *Genesis* and with Moses in the *Exodus* are emblematic: as regards the first, the divine action comes from a look at the degenerate earthly situation («Cumque vidisset Deus terram esse corruptam omnis quippe caro corruerat viam suam super terram»)<sup>8</sup> and is expressed in the close alliance with Noah («Ponamque foedus meum tecum»)<sup>9</sup> through the task of the ark (which guarantees the persistence of life after the flood) in that he is, in his generation, an entirely righteous man («Dixitque Dominus ad Noe: "Ingredere tu et omnis domus tua arcam; te enim vidi iustum coram me in generatione hac"»)<sup>10</sup> something similar happens with Abraham, also elected and in charge of a mission that realizes God's plan through and in exchange for a leadership<sup>11</sup> to be exercised over the rest of the community both to reach the end and after having reached it, with a government assignment; finally, the renewed covenant with the Jewish people through Moses and the role of which he is invested for the present and the future of the people themselves.

The character of Godfrey turns out, using the beautiful definition of Ottavio Ghidini, «vera sintesi di capitani classici e di condottieri biblici»<sup>12</sup>, and, in reference to the latter, the example of Moses seems to exert the greatest influence on the task reserved for

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Gian Giorgio Trissino, *La Italia liberata da Gotthi*, (Roma: per Valerio e Luigi Dorici, 1547), I, vv. 51-65: «va truova in sogno quel famoso e grande / Giustiniano imperador del mondo, / che or siede glorioso entr'a Durazzo, / per la vittoria d'Africa superbo. / Digli per nome mio che 'l tempo è giunto / da por la bella Ausonia in libertade; / e però quelle genti e quelle navi / che ha preparate per mandare in Spagna / a far vendetta de le gravi offese / che fece quella gente a i suoi soldati / quando a la guerra d'Africa si stava, / ora le mandi nell'Italia afflitta: / che 'n brieve tempo co 'l favor del cielo / la torrà da le man di quei tiranni / e farà degno e glorioso acquisto / de la sua vera e ben fondata sede».

<sup>4</sup> Sergio Zatti, "Canto I", in *Lettura della Gerusalemme Liberata*, ed. por Franco Tomasi (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2005), 3-24: 13-14 («The Christian God, who decrees from his heavenly throne the investiture of Godfrey as the supreme leader of the Crusader army, permanently bans, in the name of epic unity of will, any purely noble romantic alterity»).

<sup>5</sup> 1Sam 9:17.

<sup>6</sup> Ivi 16:12.

<sup>7</sup> Zatti, "Canto I", p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Gen. 6:12.

<sup>9</sup> Ivi 6:18.

<sup>10</sup> Ivi 7:1.

<sup>11</sup> Cfr. Gen. 12:1-3: «Dixit autem Dominus ad Abram: "Egredere de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui in terram, quam monstrabo tibi. Faciamque te in gentem magnam et benedicam tibi et magnificabo nomen tuum, erisque in benedictionem. Benedicam benedictibus tibi et maledictibus tibi maledicam, atque in te benedictur universae cognationes terrae!"» e Gen. 13:14-17: «Dixitque Dominus ad Abram, postquam divisus est Lot ab eo: "Leva oculos tuos et vide a loco, in quo nunc es, ad aquilonem et ad meridiem, ad orientem et ad occidentem: omnem terram, quam conspicias, tibi dabo et semini tuo usque in sempiternum; faciamque semen tuum sicut pulverem terrae: si quis potest hominum numerare pulverem terrae, semen quoque tuum numerare poterit. Surge et perambula terram in longitudine et in latitudine sua, quia tibi daturus sum eam"».

<sup>12</sup> Ottavio Ghidini, "L'epica tassiana e la Bibbia", en *La Bibbia nella letteratura italiana*, vol. v, *Dal Medioevo al Rinascimento*, ed. por Grazia Melli e Marialuigia Sipione, (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2013), 629-647, p. 631 («a true synthesis of classical captains and biblical leaders»).

the Frankish duke in the poem, which, like that of the prophet in the *Exodus*, is at the same time a guide (in this case with particular political-military connotation) and intermediary between God and *his* people. And generally, if to the account of the *Exodus* are added those of Philo and Josephus, both authors well known to Tasso: in the *Life of Moses* and in the *Antiquitates Iudaicae*, the prophet is presented not only as a guide, but as a real commander and lord of the Jewish people<sup>13</sup>, who is, moreover, often engaged in military actions. To both leaders God expresses his will, but the first, true order he imparts to them (and, consequently, the first task for the two elect) is the communication of this will to the respective ruling class:

Vade et congrega seniores Israel et dices ad eos: Dominus, Deus patrum vestrorum, apparuit mihi, Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac et Deus Iacob, dicens: Visitans visitavi vos et vidi omnia, quae acciderunt vobis in Aegypto; et dixi: Educam vos de afflictione Aegypti in terram Chananaei et Hetthaei et Amorraei et Pherezaei et Hevaei et Iebusaei, ad terram fluentem lacte et melle.<sup>14</sup>

God intimates primarily to Moses to gather the elders of Israel and announce to them what must be done because He has established that the people should abandon Egypt. Similarly, in *The Delivered*, the Eternal Father wants Godfrey to «Chiami i duci a consiglio, e i tardi mova / a l'alta impresa»<sup>15</sup>. Godfrey, like Moses, is, in short, a political leader who acts and urges his people to act in the name of a higher will for which he is the sole custodian. In this role, he constantly needs the support and trust of the community, which tends to falter easily in times of difficulty. In this regard, we find a parallel in song XIII, where a tremendous scenario of drought and heat progressively wearies the Crusader army and generates discontent and distrust towards Godfrey. This leads various contingents to leave the camp, disregarding not only the authority of the captain and his choices, but also questioning the community's interest underlying his actions.

Così languia la terra, e 'n tale stato  
egri giaceansi i miseri mortali,  
e 'l buon popol fedel, già disperato  
di vittoria, temea gli ultimi mali;  
e risonar s'udia per ogni lato  
universal lamento in voci tali:  
– Che più spera Goffredo o che più bada,

<sup>13</sup> The influence of Moses described in these works on the character of Godfrey will be deepened beyond, for now suffice, to demonstrate the assumption, the frequent use, to designate the prophet, of words such as «principe», «signore», «comandante» and «capitano»: cfr. PHILLO, *La vita di Mose, composta da Filon Giudeo in lingua Greca, e tradotta da Giulio Ballino in volgare Italiana* (Venezia: Nicolò Bevilacqua, 1559); Flavius Josephus, *De l'antichità giudaiche. Tradotto in italiano per m. Pietro Lauro modonese* (Venezia: Vincenzo Vaugris a' l' segno d' Erasmio, 1544).

<sup>14</sup> *Es.* 3:16-17.

<sup>15</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* I 12, 5-6.

si che tutto il suo campo a morte cada?  
Deh! con quai forze superar si crede  
gli alti ripari de' nemici nostri?  
onde machine attende? ei sol non vede  
l'ira del Cielo a tanti segni mostri?  
de la sua mente aversa a noi fan fede  
mille novi prodigi e mille mostri,  
ed arde a noi così che minore uopo  
di refrigerio ha l'Indo o l'Etiopo.  
Dunque stima costui che nulla importe  
che n'andiam noi, turba negletta, indegna,  
vili ed inutili alme, a dura morte,  
perch'ei lo scettro imperial mantegna?  
Cotanto dunque fortunata sorte  
rassembra quella di colui che regna,  
che ritener si cerca avidamente  
a danno ancor de la soggetta gente?  
Or mira d'uom c'ha il titolo di pio  
providenza pietosa, animo umano:  
la salute de' suoi porre in oblio  
per conservarsi onor dannoso e vano;  
e veggendo a noi secchi i fonti e 'l rio,  
per sè l'acque condur fa dal Giordano,  
e fra pochi sedendo a mensa lieta,  
mescolar l'onde fresche al vin di Creta<sup>16</sup>.

The “universal lament” of the soldiers strongly recalls the rebellion of the people against Moses, as recounted in *Exodus* 15:17. In a similarly desert scenario, the initial complaints arise specifically from the lack of water («Et murmuravit populus contra Moysen dicens: “Quid bibemus?”») <sup>17</sup>, as the marching people, much like the crusader army, are exhausted from thirst. Subsequently, due to the scarcity of food, they begin to question Moses' leadership and the effectiveness of his role:

Et murmuravit omnis congregatio filiorum Israel contra Moysen et Aaron in solitudine, dixeruntque filii Israel ad eos: “Utinam mortui essemus per manum Domini in terra Aegypti, quando sedebamus super ollas carniū et comedebamus panem in saturitate. Cur eduxistis nos in desertum istud, ut occideretis omnem coetum fame?”<sup>18</sup>

Episode that is renewed in the next chapter, still for the lack of water:

Igitur profecta omnis congregatio filiorum Israel de deserto Sin per mansiones suas iuxta sermonem Domini, castrametati sunt in Raphidim, ubi non erat aqua ad bibendum populo. Qui iurgatus contra Moysen ait: “Da nobis aquam, ut bibamus”. Quibus respondit Moyses: “Quid iurgamini contra me? Cur tentatis Dominum?” Sitivit ergo ibi populus prae aquae penuria et murmuravit contra Moysen dicens: “Cur fecisti nos exire de Aegypto, ut occideres nos et liberos nostros ac iumenta siti?”<sup>19</sup>.

Both communities express their doubts with openly polemical questions. Both arrive at the as-

<sup>16</sup> *Ivi*, XIII 64-67.

<sup>17</sup> *Es.* 15:24.

<sup>18</sup> *Ivi* 16:2-3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ivi* 17:1-3

sumption that the actions of their respective leaders were aimed at leading them to death («Che più spera Goffredo o che più bada, / sì che tutto il suo campo a morte cada?»); «Cur eduxistis nos in desertum istud, ut occideretis omnem coetum fame?» e «Cur fecisti nos exire de Aegypto, ut occideres nos et liberos nostros ac iumenta siti?»). The Christian army, in short, behaves in a similar way to the people chosen by God, and it does not seem accidental that, in line 3 of the octave 64, Tasso refers to the Crusaders as «popol fedel». Likewise, Godfrey's response to the upheaval of the people, of which God has placed him at the head, conforms to that mosaic: executors of a transcendent mandate, unable to resolve a situation that endangers the entire community by their own forces, they can only rely on the common instigator so that, with his intervention, he resolves the trap and restores the undermined confidence of the collective in their leadership. Moses turns to God, who, on all three occasions, responds positively to prayer: in the first case, he allows Moses to make the bitter water of the spring drinkable<sup>20</sup>, in the second, he rains the manna<sup>21</sup>, and finally, he makes sure that water gushes from the stone hit by the stick of his assistant.

Clamavit autem Moyses ad Dominum dicens: “Quid faciam populo huic? Adhuc paululum et lapidabunt me”. Et ait Dominus ad Moysen: “Antecede populum et sume tecum de senioribus Israel, et virgam, qua percussisti fluvium, tolle in manu tua et vade. En ego stabo coram te ibi super petram Horeb; percutiesque petram, et exibit ex ea aqua, ut bibat populus”. Fecit Moyses ita coram senioribus Israel<sup>22</sup>.

Likewise, Godfrey turned to God to ask for His saving intervention, and the words of his prayer explicitly reflected the construction based on the model of the *Exodus*, with the correspondence between the Christian “captain” and Moses, and that between the Jewish people and the Crusader army.

– Padre e Signor, s'al popol tuo piovesti già le dolci rugiade entro al deserto,  
s'a mortal mano già virtù porgesti  
romper le pietre e trar del monte aperto  
un vivo fiume, or rinovella in questi  
gli stessi esempi; e s'ineguale è 'l merto,  
adempi di tua grazia i lor difetti,  
e giovi lor che tuoi guerrier sian detti.<sup>23</sup>

As Ghidini observes, «giustapponendo explicite epopea giudaica ed epopea crociata, il poeta convoca entro il proprio testo i due segni divini che aveva-

no accompagnato il cammino del popolo d'Israele verso la Terrasanta: il dono della manna [...] e il miracolo dell'acqua sgorgata dalla roccia»<sup>24</sup>, this by mentioning the “popol” of God and the “mortal mano” of Moses and praying to renew “in questi gli stessi esempi”. The Captain does not limit himself to asking passively for his army the same treatment given by God to the Jewish people: invoking the Eternal Father to renew “in questi/gli stessi esempi” and referring, therefore, both to the gift of manna and to the water gushing from the rock, not only wants the crusader camp to be saved as a new chosen people but also that his hand be made that of a new Moses, so that he can actively benefit the community he leads; a community that, like the Bible, has sinned against God and offended his authority, but for which Godly Godly Godly Godly Godly God, just like Moses after the manufacture of the golden calf, («Reversusque ad Dominum ait: ‘Obsecro, peccavit populus iste peccatum maximum, feceruntque sibi deos aureos; aut dimitte eis hanc noxam...’»<sup>25</sup>; «...e s'ineguale è 'l merto, / adempi di tua grazia i lor difetti»).

At the same time, if the Christian commander mentions the events of the *Exodus* as they approach those experienced by him and his army, it is interesting that Tasso models the events of the Duce and the troops precisely to make them adhere to the history of Moses and the Jews. And note, in this regard, that neither the prayer nor the revolt of the thirsty army is traced in the most famous Tassian historiographical source, the *Historia belli sacri* by William of Tyre: In the chronicle, there are scenarios of drought resolved by events described as divine, but there are no internal seditions of the troops, and the divine intervention is carried out without official prayers. This happens even in the only case in which the *Historia* speaks of rain sent from Sky<sup>26</sup>, a step that Federico Di Santo identifies as influential on that of the *Liberata*<sup>27</sup>: although the army had been described a few chapters before as devoured by hunger, the reaction of the soldiers was manifested only in deep discomfort, pushed up to the suspicion of divine indifference for their fortunes.

<sup>24</sup> Ghidini, *L'epica...* p. 638 («By juxtaposing *explicit* Jewish epic and the Crusader epic, the poet summons within their own text the two divine signs that had accompanied the journey of the people of Israel to the Holy Land: the gift of manna [...] and the miracle of water gushing forth from the rock»).

<sup>25</sup> *Es.* 32:31.

<sup>26</sup> Cfr. William of Tyre, *Chronique*, édition critique par R.B.C. Huygens (Turnholt: Brepols, 1986) VI, 19: «Successe nell'essercito de i nostri una cosa, invero degna di memoria, che essendo in punto per uscir fuori della porta della città assediata, poi che hebbero ammazzati parte de gli inimici che facevano ogn'opra per vietarli l'uscita, e parte posti in fuga, scese una soavissima rugiada dal cielo, sopra l'essercito nostro, la qual fu poca, ma molto grata, nella quale pareva che Iddio avesse rinchiusa ogni sua beneditione, et ogni sua gratia. Onde tutti quelli che furono rinfrescati da quella rugiada, si sentirono di modo accrescer il vigore, e l'allegrezza».

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. Federico Di Santo, “Tasso e la Cronaca di Guglielmo di Tiro, la materia storica nella Gerusalemme liberata”, *Nuova Rivista di Letteratura Italiana*, 18 (2015), 69-136.

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. Ivi 15:25: «At ille clamavit ad Dominum, qui ostendit ei lignum; quod cum misisset in aquas, in dulcedinem versae sunt».

<sup>21</sup> Cfr. Ivi 16:4: «Dixit autem Dominus ad Moysen: “Ecce ego pluam vobis panes de caelo; egredietur populus et colligat, quae sufficiunt per singulos dies, ut tentem eum, utrum ambulet in lege mea an non...».

<sup>22</sup> Ivi 17:4-6.

<sup>23</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, XIII 71.



Fig. 1. Valentin de Boulogne, *Moses*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Moreover, the rain is not presented as a direct consequence of such despondency (which follows, instead, another miraculous event)<sup>28</sup>, but it is after the victorious siege action of the crusaders. Lies Verbaere, in her PhD thesis “*Non dee chi regna con tutti esser uguale*”. *L’arte del comando cristiano e pagano nella Gerusalemme Liberata di Torquato Tasso e la Historia belli sacri di Guglielmo di Tiro*, explains that «Sebbene Tasso non inventi l’intervento divino, lo amplia molto: lo spunto della *Historia* (VI, 19) diventano dieci ottave (GL XIII, 70- 80)»<sup>29</sup>. Indeed, not only is the beginning of the rain widened from the prayer of Godfrey, «un’invenzione di Tasso che mette in rilievo la figura del capo»<sup>30</sup>: the enlargement - when it is not a real creation - concerns, as shown, the entire course of the episode. At this point, it can be asserted that the remarkable modifications operated by Tasso regarding an event however attested from the historical source<sup>31</sup> graft exactly the elements through which the parallel with the Mosaic experience is substantiated, and from this syncretic intent seem determined: the drought, then the complaints and the uprising of the army faithfully reproduce the biblical dynamics; as the reaction of Godfrey and the

immediate divine response reproduce it. These last two gestures, the Captain’s prayer and the sudden listening to God, are actually, from the part of the respective authors, due acts, precisely because of the construction in analogy with the Old Testament history: in the *Exodus*, God entrusts to Moses the task of leading the Jews out of Egypt with the promise that he will accompany him and the chosen people and act in their favor to ensure success<sup>32</sup>; likewise, in investing Godfrey with the role and task decreed, the God of the *Liberata* gives a guarantee of support and victory<sup>33</sup>; Godfrey, who at this juncture is a new Moses, acts consistently with the conduct of the biblical character, referring to God for the dissolution of a difficulty that risks compromising the desired outcome of divine providence; on the other hand, the same assumptions require that God intervene in favor of his chosen one, as he did with Moses. In light of the evident biblical pattern, it is possible to understand the entire dynamics of the passage and the set of the author’s choices.

However, it should be stressed that the approach to the model does not take place generally, but in precise contexts: the first analogy is traced, as shown, at the moment of the divine cooptation of Godfrey, to which communication to his peers is primarily required of the heavenly decree; the second is in the complaints within the thirsty army, then in the prayer with which the Captain obtains the intervention of God and dissolves the difficulty. To unite these circumstances, in the *Liberata* as in the models offered by the *Exodus*, is the fact that all are based on the dialectic community-leader; the parallel between the Christian army and the Jewish people<sup>34</sup> exists only in conjunction with and in relation to that of Godfrey and Moses, in terms of the dynamics between the parties. It is then possible to reformulate the approach referred to above by decisively expanding its nature: not only a juxtaposition of the undertaking and condition of the crusaders with the experience of the Jewish people, but also an analogy of the political relations between the two leaders and their communities.

Tasso introduces into his work a first form of political organization, through which he raises the army from the situation of inertia and disunity in which it is caught at the opening of the poem: it was written at the beginning of the paragraph that the heavenly in-

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. *ivi*, VI, 14: «Fu fatta una revelatione a un certo Pietro, per la quale fu trovata la lancia del Signore, onde di nuovo i presero i Christiani animo».

<sup>29</sup> Verbaere, “*Non dee chi regna...*”, p. 39 («Although Tasso did not invent the divine intervention, he greatly expands it: the inspiration from *Historia* (VI, 19) becomes ten stanzas»).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. Di Santo, “Tasso e la Cronaca”...

<sup>32</sup> Cfr. *Es.* 3:12-21

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. *Gerusalemme liberata* I, 17 (vv. 2-4): «...Oh quanta spene / aver d’alta vittoria, oh quanto zelo / de l’oste a te commessa or ti conviene!».

<sup>34</sup> It should be stressed that such assimilation was a widespread subject, at the time of the facts, among the ideologues of the Crusade, and that the reason is, consequently, present in contemporary literary works, such as the *Chanson de Jerusalem*; however, studies that shed light on the possible Tassian knowledge of the theme and the works in which it appears. On the subject at the time of the expedition, cfr. Scott M. Langston, *Exodus Through the Centuries*, (Hoboken NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 134-36 e Dennis H. Green, *The Millstätter Exodus: A Crusading Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

tervention with which Godfrey is chosen head of the expedition follows the Creator's gaze on the situation of the army faithful to him, as well as, moreover, the task entrusted to Moses results from the divine ascertainment of the state of suffering of the people elected in Egypt<sup>35</sup>; the choice of leadership and, therefore, of the head, with the new order that determines in the community, wants to be the solution. If the approach to the history of the Jewish exodus is permitted by the analogous providential nature in the light of which the Crusader enterprise is read, the Mosaic attributes of God and the army make it possible to better understand the configuration that the commander and his men assume in the poem: the Crusader team is also, in its march towards Jerusalem, a people marching on the model of the Jewish, with the ultimate goal - as Godfrey will remember in his first prayer to the soldiers - of founding «in Palestina un nuovo regno»<sup>36</sup>, Right in the land that had been the destination of the people led by Moses, the Christian duce, in turn, is the leader of a people, and therefore the custodian of not only military but also juridical, moral, and spiritual authority. Ultimately, the parallel with the history of the *Exodus* helps us understand, in a preliminary way, how the relationship between the army and its captain takes on the form, in the *Liberata*, of a relationship between a lord and the people, and how the actions of the former are strictly necessary for the life of the latter.

It has already been observed that the trait that Godfrey seems to derive from the figure of Moses is not so much the prophetic one but rather the political one. Moses alone leads a people towards a new dwelling place, and as the head of that community, he acts as its representative and guarantor, functioning as an intermediary between them and God. The political connotation of Moses finds its first and most well-known theorist in Machiavelli, who includes him among the “grandissimi esempi” (greatest examples) of the new principalities discussed in the sixth chapter of *The Prince*.

Ma per venire a quegli che per propria virtù e non per fortuna sono diventati principi, dico che e' più eccellenti sono Moisè, Ciro, Romulo, Teseo e simili. E benché di Moisè non si debba ragionare, sendo suto uno mero esecutore delle cose che gli erano ordinate da Dio, tamen debbe essere ammirato, solum per quella grazia che lo faceva degno di parlare con Dio. Ma considerato Ciro e li altri che hanno acquistato o fondati regni, gli troverrete tutti mirabili; e se si considerranno le azioni e

ordini loro particolari, parranno non discrepanti da quegli di Moisè, che ebbe sì grande precettore<sup>37</sup>.

The grace that made Moses worthy of speaking with God is, without a doubt, the first point of contact with Godfrey, the only one to whom this privilege is granted in the poem and which is obviously, at least in part, an “esecutore delle cose [...] ordinate da Dio.” However, the presentation of a new prince Moses, and particularly a founding Moses, makes them similar<sup>38</sup>. As Riccardo Caporali observes, he devotes an in-depth study to the portrait of the biblical prophet in the Machiavellian work, which is rich in ideas for our reflection. «Mosè è a pieno titolo tra gli ‘edificatori delle cittadi’: non, propriamente, il fondatore di una nuova città, come Enea, ma un conquistatore di quelle altrui»<sup>39</sup>. The association with the crusader captain is somewhat evident, and it is Godfrey himself who establishes it when he reminds his comrades of the objective of the expedition and each of the operations carried out so far.

Ma fu de' pensier nostri ultimo segno  
espugnar di Sion le nobil mura,  
e sottrarre i cristiani al giogo indegno  
di servitù così spiacente e dura,  
fondando in Palestina un novo regno,  
ov'abbia la pietà sede sicura;  
né sia chi neghi al peregrin devoto  
d'adorar la gran tomba e sciörre il voto<sup>40</sup>.

The foundation of a new kingdom on Palestinian territory places the franc directly in analogy with Machiavelli's political emblem of Moses. In the second book of *Discourses*, Machiavelli identifies two kinds (“generazioni”) of wars:

L'una è fatta per ambizione de' principi o delle repubbliche, che cercano di propagare lo imperio; come furono le guerre che fece Alessandro Magno, e quelle che fecero i Romani, e quelle che fanno, ciascuno di, l'una potenza con l'altra. Le quali guerre sono pericolose, ma non cacciano al tutto gli abitatori d'una provincia; perché e' basta, al vincitore, solo la ubbidienza de' popoli, e il più delle volte gli lascia vivere con le loro leggi, e sempre con le loro case, e ne' loro beni. L'altra generazione di guerra è quando uno popolo intero con tutte le sue famiglie si lieva d'uno luogo, necessitato o dalla fame o dalla guerra, e va a cercare nuova sede e nuova provincia; non per comandarla, come quegli di sopra, ma per possederla tutta particolarmente, e cac-

<sup>35</sup> Cfr. *Es.* 3:7-10: «Cui ait Dominus: “Vidi afflictionem populi mei in Aegypto et clamorem eius audivi propter duritiam exactorum eorum. Et sciens dolorem eius descendi, ut liberem eum de manibus Aegyptiorum et educam de terra illa in terram bonam et spatiosam, in terram, quae fluit lacte et melle, ad loca Chananaei et Hetthaei et Amorraei et Pherezaei et Hevaei et Iebusaei. Clamor ergo filiorum Israel venit ad me, vidique afflictionem eorum, qua ab Aegyptiis opprimuntur; sed veni, mittam te ad pharaonem, ut educas populum meum, filios Israel, de Aegypto”».

<sup>36</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* I 23, 5.

<sup>37</sup> See Gaetano Lettieri, *Nove tesi sull'ultimo Machiavelli, Humanistas*, 72 (2017), pp. 1043-44.

<sup>38</sup> Alison Brown, *Savonarola, Machiavelli and Moses: a changing model*, in *Florence and Italy. Renaissances studies in honor of Nicolai Rubinstein*, ed. by Peter Denley, Caroline Elam, (London, Westfield College 1988), pp. 57-72 and Lucio Biasiori, *Mosè*, in *Enciclopedia Machiavelliana*, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> Riccardo Caporali, *Immagini di Mosè in Machiavelli e Spinoza*, in «Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics», XVI 1 (2014): 67-91: 72 («Moses is fully entitled to be among the ‘city builders’: not properly the founder of a new city, like Aeneas, but a conqueror of others»).

<sup>40</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* I, 23.



ciarne o ammazzare gli abitatori antichi di quella. Questa guerra è crudelissima e paventosissima<sup>41</sup>.

Then, Machiavelli goes on to deal in detail with each of the two, and, concerning the second, he explains how

Escono tali popoli de' paesi loro [...] cacciati dalla necessità: e la necessità nasce o dalla fame, o da una guerra ed oppressione che ne' paesi propri è loro fatta: talché e' son costretti cercare nuove terre. E questi tali, o e' sono gran numero; ed allora con violenza entrano ne' paesi d'altrui, ammazzano gli abitatori, posseggono i loro beni, fanno uno nuovo regno, mutano il nome della provincia: come fece Moisè, e quelli popoli che occuparono lo Imperio romano<sup>42</sup>.

It is almost superfluous to point this out: neither hunger nor an invasion caused the war undertaken by the crusaders, but to explain how this fully falls within the second typology figured by Machiavelli, once again the words of Godfrey are relevant.

già non lasciammo i dolci pegni e 'l nido  
nativo noi (se 'l creder mio non erra),  
né la vita esponemmo al mare infido  
ed a i perigli di lontana guerra,  
per acquistar di breve suono un grido  
vulgare e posseder barbara terra,  
ché proposto ci avremmo angusto e scarso  
premio, e in danno de l'alme il sangue sparso.

Not a war driven by expansionist ambitions, but a war aimed at the foundation of a new kingdom, according to the definition common to the poet and the treatise, as Moise did («come fece Moisè») and in that same territory. A new kingdom in which cult and laws will be changed, whose foundation will foresee, albeit nurtured with a partisan perspective, the same conditions envisioned by Machiavelli, to the extent that the final siege of Jerusalem, in the nineteenth song, describes unequivocal scenes:

Mentre qui segue la solinga guerra,  
che privata cagion fe' così ardente,  
l'ira de' vincitor trascorre ed erra  
per la città su 'l popolo nocente.  
Or chi giamai de l'espugnata terra  
potrebbe a pien l'immagine dolente  
ritrarre in carte od adeguar parlando  
lo spettacolo atroce e miserando?  
Ogni cosa di strage era già pieno,  
vedeansi in mucchi e in monti i corpi avolti:  
là i feriti su i morti, e qui giacieno  
sotto morti insepolti egri sepolti.  
Fuggian premendo i pargoletti al seno  
le meste madri co' capegli sciolti,  
e 'l predator, di spoglie e di rapine  
carco, stringea le vergini nel crine<sup>43</sup>.

The subsequent description of Rinaldo's piety towards the unarmed, spared by the knight's sword, does not erase the scene of the desperate escape of the population from the city that will be the seat of the new kingdom.

Even before that, as the founder, however, Godfrey is reflected in Machiavellian Moses for his role as the "ordinatore" of his state: the reasons for his election to a form of unius imperium, expressed in the speech of Pietro l'Eremita, lie in the need for a complete institutional and legislative reorganization that requires individual action («ove un sol non impera [...] ivi errante il governo esser conviene»)<sup>44</sup>. The reference to the *Discourses* is obliged, particularly to the chapter of the first book, significantly entitled «Come egli è necessario essere solo a volere ordinare una repubblica di nuovo, o al tutto fuor degli antichi suoi ordini riformarla»:

E debbesi pigliare questo per una regola generale: che mai o rado occorre che alcuna repubblica o regno sia, da principio, ordinato bene, o al tutto di nuovo, fuora degli ordini vecchi, riformato, se non è ordinato da uno; anzi è necessario che uno solo sia quello che dia il modo, e dalla cui mente dependa qualunque simile ordinazione. Però, uno prudente ordinatore d'una repubblica, e che abbia questo animo, di volere giovare non a sé ma al bene comune, non alla sua propria successione ma alla comune patria, debbe ingegnarsi di avere l'autorità, solo<sup>45</sup>.

The continuation of the discourse goes so far as to legitimize even violent actions, if necessary and aimed at achieving the end which has as its object not an unscrupulous desire for power but the good of the community. Such unwise arguments, which Tasso also shows he does not ignore, do not concern the situation of the poem since, including the necessity of the act following the speech of the Eremita, the principles unanimously agree with the conferral of exclusive authority on Godfrey. This authority, as long as it remains equal among many, is the cause of all the evils of the field, with an argument perfectly faithful to that of the Machiavellian chapter. On the other hand, it is Machiavelli himself, always in the *Discourses*, who explains how authority can be assigned in a healthy state, unanimously and willingly accepting submission to an individual recognized as superior by virtue.

Notasi per questo testo, quello che faccia uno uomo buono e savio, e di quanto bene sia cagione, e quanto utile e' possa fare alla sua patria, quando, mediante la sua bontà e virtù, egli ha spenta la invidia [...] Spegnesi questa invidia in due modi. O per qualche accidente forte e difficile, dove ciascuno, veggendosi perire, postposta ogni ambizione, corre volontariamente ad ubbidire a colui che crede che con la sua virtù lo possa liberare: come intervenne a Cammillo, il quale avendo dato di sé tanti saggi di uomo eccellentissimo, ed essendo stato tre volte Dittatore, ed avendo amministrato

<sup>41</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, ed. por Giorgio Inglese (Milano: BUR, 1984), II, 8.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>43</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* XIX 29-30.

<sup>44</sup> *Ivi*, I 31.

<sup>45</sup> Machiavelli, *Discorsi* I, 9.



Fig. 2. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Il miracolo della manna*, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

sempre quel grado ad utile publico, e non a propria utilità aveva fatto che gli uomini non temevano della grandezza sua; e per esser tanto grande e tanto riputato, non stimavano cosa vergognosa essere inferiori a lui [...] in un altro modo si spegne l'invidia quando, o per violenza o per ordine naturale, muoiono coloro che sono stati tuoi concorrenti nel venire a qualche riputazione ed a qualche grandezza; quali, veggendoti riputato più di loro, è impossibile che mai acquieschino, e stieno pazienti<sup>46</sup>.

The case of Godfrey is rightly part of the first typology since submission, however desired by Heaven and prefigured by the archangel, remains entirely voluntary (just like the specific Gabriel himself) and is based on the recognition of its special value. This becomes even more evident when we consider how the subsequent intervention of the narrator shows surprise precisely due to the absence of envy implied by this unanimous decision.

Qui tacque il veglio. Or quai pensier, quai petti  
son chiusi a te, sant'Aura e divo Ardore?  
Inspiri tu de l'Eremita i detti,

<sup>46</sup> Ivi, III, 30.

e tu gl'imprimi a i cavalier nel core;  
sgombri gl'inserti, anzi gl'innati affetti  
di sovrastar, di libertà, d'onore,  
sì che Guglielmo e Guelfo, i più sublimi,  
chiamar Goffredo per lor duce i primi<sup>47</sup>.

Returning to speak of Moses, the chapter on the ordination of states continues with a list of historical examples including the biblical prophet:

Potrebbsi dare in sostentamento delle cose soprascritte infiniti esempi; come Moises, Licurgo, Solone, ed altri fondatori di regni e di repubbliche, e' quali potero, per aversi attribuito un'autorità, formare leggi a proposito del bene comune: ma li voglio lasciare indietro, come cosa nota<sup>48</sup>.

The relationship between Godfrey and Moses helps to better understand the role of the former in that exquisitely political perspective through which Machiavelli reads the latter. Godfrey is the ordainer of his state, represented by the totality of the army. He is united to others by the individual nature that

<sup>47</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* I, 32.

<sup>48</sup> Machiavelli, *Discorsi* I, 9.



one's power must have to be effective and lead to an end that never comes close to selfish desires but remains exclusively aimed at the common good and the stated goal.

As noted, however, the government of Godfrey, like that of Moses and in circumstances that follow the vicissitudes of the *Exodus*, experiences dissent and riots from the community on various occasions. These dynamics, of course, do not escape Machiavelli's reflection. In the sixth chapter of the *Prince*, where Moses appears among the «più eccellenti» examples of those who «per propria virtù [...] sono diventati principi», Machiavelli makes a reflection to which he attaches particular importance:

è necessario pertanto, volendo discorrere bene questa parte, esaminare se questi innovatori stanno per loro medesimi o se dependono da altri: cioè se per condurre l'opera loro bisogna che preghino, o vero possono forzare. Nel primo caso, sempre capitano male e non conducono cosa alcuna; ma quando dependono da loro propri e possono forzare, allora è che rare volte periclitano: di qui nacque che tutti e' profeti armati vinsono ed e' disarmati ruinorno. Perché, oltre alle cose dette, la natura de' populi è varia ed è facile a persuadere loro una cosa, ma è difficile fermargli in quella persuasione: e però conviene essere ordinato in modo che, quando non credono più, si possa fare loro credere per forza. Moisè, Ciro, Teseo e Romulo non arebbono potuto fare osservare loro lungamente le loro costituzioni, se fussino stati disarmati<sup>49</sup>.

If circumstances so require, the *ordinatore* must be equipped with instruments capable of forcibly bending counter actions to his actions and revolts against his authority: these are, of course, weapons, and therefore the capacity for repression. It is then appropriate to observe how Godfrey, in the circumstances of the strongest memory of Moses, does not choose, but does not ignore, the possibility of armed repression: the reference is, clearly, to the episode of the thirteenth canto in which, Exhausted by thirst, numerous contingents begin to leave the camp and conspire against the captain. Biblical is the solicitation (the riot of the *people thirsty*) and biblical reaction (the prayer that *causes* the rain), what does not appear in the biblical story, but in the reflection of the *Prince*, is precisely the possibility of a violent response:

Ben se l'ode Goffredo e ben se 'l vede,  
e i più aspri rimedi avria ben pronti,  
ma gli schiva ed aborre; e con la fede

<sup>49</sup> Id., *De principatibus*, ed. por. Giorgio Inglese (Roma: ISIME, 1994) VI 2. See Paolo Carta, «Armato» e «disarmato». *Niccolò Machiavelli sui «segni» e le «arme»*, *Il pensiero politico*, 50 (2017/3), pp. 389-398, Emanuele Cutinelli-Rendina, *Chiesa e religione in Machiavelli* (Pisa-Roma, Istituto editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1998), Innocenzo Cervelli, *Savonarola, Machiavelli e il libro dell'Esodo*, in *Savonarola. Democrazia, tirannide, profezia*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Firenze, Sismel 1998), pp. 243-98 and Raffaele Ruggiero, *Niccolò Machiavelli e «chi legge la Bibbia sensatamente»*, *Nuova Rivista di Letteratura Italiana*, XXIII, 2 (2020), pp. 13-42.

che faria stare i fiumi e gir i monti,  
devotamente al Re del mondo chiede  
che gli apra omai de la sua grazia i fonti:  
giunge le palme, e fiammeggianti in zelo  
gli occhi rivolge e le parole al Cielo<sup>50</sup>.

The choice of Godfrey manages to avoid bloodshed and guarantees the episode an epilogue with sacred and mystical tones, while also preserving the piety that is among the main characteristics of the character. However, it is significant that, in a passage clearly reminiscent of the biblical model where Moses turns to prayer while risking and fearing being stoned to death by the people, Godfrey does the same to prevent his men's insurrection from ending in bloodshed. By listening only to the prayer of the Creator, he also ensures that resorting to such a solution does not become necessary. It should not be overlooked that the possibility of violent repression is also considered in the other main case of revolt within the camp, namely Argillano's. In a situation of even greater gravity (as a real armed threat from the conspirators), Godfrey once again turns to prayer as a direct solution, explicitly requesting divine intervention to avoid the need for a violent response in order to suppress the turmoil. In fact, he says:

Egli, ch'ode l'accusa, i lumi al cielo  
drizza e pur come suole a Dio ricorre:  
– Signor, tu che sai ben con quanto zelo  
la destra mia del civil sangue aborre,  
tu squarcia a questi de la mente il velo,  
e reprimi il furor che si trascorre;  
e l'innocenza mia, che costà sopra  
è nota, al mondo cieco anco si scopra<sup>51</sup>.

In this case, moreover, although cloaked in the mystical aura conferred by divine intervention, Godfrey's reaction is still repressive and anything but conciliatory. The captain categorically refuses to give reasons or excuses, imposes his will and authority, and only an act of piety spares the whole of the conspirators from the penalty, which affects only Argillano.

– Quali stolte minaccie e quale or odovano strepito d'arme? e chi il commove?  
Così qui riverito e in questo modo noto son io, dopo sì lunghe prove,  
ch'ancor v'è chi sospetti e chi di frodo Goffredo accusi? e chi l'accuse approve?  
Forse aspettate ancor ch'a voi mi pieghi, e ragioni v'adduca e porga preghi?  
Ah non sia ver che tanta indignitate la terra piena del mio nome intenda.  
Me questo scettro, me de l'onorate opre mie la memoria e 'l ver difenda;  
e per or la giustizia a la pietate ceda, né sovra i rei la pena scenda.  
A gli altri merti or questo error perdono,

<sup>50</sup> Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata* XIII, 70.

<sup>51</sup> Ivi, VIII.

ed al vostro Rinaldo anco vi dono.  
 Co 'l sangue suo lavi il comun difetto  
 solo Argillan, di tante colpe autore,  
 che, mosso a leggierrissimo sospetto,  
 sospinti gli altri ha nel medesimo errore. –  
 Lampi e folgori ardean nel regio aspetto,  
 mentre ei parlò, di maestà, d'onore;  
 tal ch' Argillano attonito e conquiso  
 teme (chi 'l crederia?) l'ira d'un viso<sup>52</sup>.

The scepter, and thus the royal authority, are here reaffirmed more than ever, serving as the sole legitimization and guarantee of his work. Every suspicion must be extinguished in the face of this authority, and faith should never be questioned. Referring back to Machiavelli's words, we can observe how Godfrey, like Moses and the other "profeti armati," while maintaining his pious nature, compels men to "credere per forza" when their trust falters. This compulsion does not involve explanation, briefing, concession to suspicion, or understanding. Instead, it firmly imposes trust in the name of the highest authority. Furthermore, it is important to remember the distinction from which the Machiavellian discourse begins, namely, "se questi innovatori stanno per loro medesimi o se dependono da altri: cioè se per condurre l'opera loro bisogna che preghino, o vero possono forzare." For those who depend on others, inevitable failure is foreshadowed, while for those who can force their own plans, success is guaranteed. A careful reading of Godfrey's response to the riot incited by Argillano clearly demonstrates how he fully embraces this second and winning approach. The same holds true in another critical instance, the killing of Gernando by Rinaldo in the fifth canto. In this case, the Christian paladin violates a law enacted by the supreme authority, and nothing can exempt him from the just punishment. Godfrey emphasizes this point strongly in his response to the defender Tancredi. The captain explicitly references the absolute nature of his power, to which the entire collective is subject, and from whose orders no one can escape:

Qual fòra imperio il mio s'a vili ed imi,  
 sol duce de la plebe, io commandassi?  
 Scettro impotente e vergognoso impero:  
 se con tal legge è dato, io più no 'l chero.  
 Ma libero fu dato e venerando,  
 né vuo' ch'alcun d'autorità lo scemi<sup>53</sup>.

If he were confirmed guilty without any mitigation, it is said that the penalty for Rinaldo would be death. The dynamics of the poem will avoid the bloody scenario in this case, but the outlined institutional design is equally clear. Goddiscorfrey is the bearer of a heavenly mandate, which seeks the liberation and conquest of Jerusalem, and an earthly one, which entails the reorganization of the army torn by "discordie ed onte" as mentioned by Pietro l'Eremita,

in view of the same objective. This second mandate involves a new and solid internal organization, as well as new laws and provisions, the respect of which is a *sine qua non* for the community's balance. Therefore, this respect must be guaranteed at all costs, even if it means resorting to the conditions contemplated by Machiavelli, according to which «chi legge la Bibbia sensatamente, vedrà Moisè essere stato forzato, a volere che le sue leggi e che i suoi ordini andassero innanzi, ad ammazzare infiniti uomini, i quali, non mossi da altro che dalla invidia, si opponevano a' disegni suoi»<sup>54</sup>. The Christian leader always manages to avoid resorting to such extremes, but at the same time, he demonstrates that he keeps them well-presented in all those contexts where his leadership and action are threatened, as they could potentially be necessary.

Godfrey shares with Moses the status of a new prince ascended to the principality by virtue, and the greatest difficulty lies in the imposition of new orders, a common experience according to Machiavelli, for each of these figures.

Quelli e' quali per vie virtuose, simili a costoro, diventano principi, acquistano el principato con difficoltà, ma con facilità lo tengono; e le difficoltà che gli hanno nello acquistare el principato nascono in parte da' nuovi ordini e modi che sono forzati introdurre per fondare lo stato loro e la loro sicurtà. E debbesi considerare come e' non è cosa più difficile a trattare, né più dubbia a riuscire, né più pericolosa a maneggiare, che farsi capo di introdurre nuovi ordini. Perché lo introduttore ha per nimico tutti queglii che degli ordini vecchi fanno bene, e ha tiepidi defensori tutti quelli che delli ordini nuovi farebbono bene: la quale tepidezza nasce parte per paura delli avversari, che hanno le leggi dal canto loro, parte da la incredulità degli uomini, e' quali non credono in verità le cose nuove, se non ne veggono nata una ferma esperienza. Donde nasce che, qualunque volta quelli che sono nimici hanno occasione di assaltare, lo fanno partigianamente, e quelli altri difendono tiepidamente: in modo che insieme con loro si periclitano.

The new order introduced by the Franks is an *anti-romance* order that rejects and replaces the old orders. It uses the Machiavellian expression represented by the reasons of honor and courtesy. This entails abandoning any individualistic conception of war and avoiding selfish deviations from the collective goal. The focus is solely on the common goal, to be achieved as quickly as possible. Consequently, the safety and cohesion of the camp take precedence over the protection of individual honor. Thus, the objective of the expedition comes before the rescue of a girl. Imposing this new order inevitably encounters resistance from those who cling to the old orders, as demonstrated by the opposition of the soldiers to Godfrey's decision not to aid Armida. Even the typically chivalrous murder committed by Rinaldo, in the

<sup>52</sup> Ivi, VIII 79-81.

<sup>53</sup> Ivi, V 37 (5-8) e 38 (1-2).

<sup>54</sup> Machiavelli, *Discorsi* II, 30.



Fig. 3. Uncertain author, *Passaggio del Mar Rosso*, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

name of honor, shows the clash between the old and new orders. Rinaldo shares his name with the paladin from Tasso's youth novel.

In response to these oppositions, the law must intervene. The firmness of authority embodied by Godfrey, the authorizing officer of the state, is crucial. He represents the bearer of a new order that exclusively pursues the common good and the collective end. Godfrey is the virtuous prince or the Machiavellian *ordinatori* transplanted into the republic of a poem. In order to reorder it, he must stand alone, as theorized by the Florentine secretary. For the same reason, he must be resolute in enforcing laws and ensuring the completion of "his plans," always prioritizing the common good over personal benefit.

However, his virtue will lead him to success, and each conflict he overcomes will strengthen his authority. With the full support of the collective, he will achieve decisive victory. This aligns with Machiavelli's propositions for these principles:

Però questi tali hanno nel condursi grande difficoltà, e tutti e' loro pericoli sono fra via e conviene che con la virtù gli superino. Ma superati che gli hanno, e che cominciano a essere in venerazione, avendo spenti queglii che di sua qualità gli avevano invidia, rimangono potenti, sicuri, onorati e felici<sup>55</sup>.

It has been said that Godfrey, faithful to the mosaic model, used prayer to resolve the revolts inside the camp. From the beginning, moreover, he enjoys

the exclusive privilege of being the intermediary between divinity and the community of the part protected by God, deriving from the full virtue that the Creator sees in his soul. Just like Moses, using the words of the *Prince*, Godfrey is the possessor of that «grazia che lo faceva degno di parlare con Dio».

The divine interventions in the poem serve a subsidiary function to the captain's work in situations of particular difficulty, and their miraculous nature is simply the manifestation of God's favor towards the enterprise carried out by Godfrey. They are the signs of the victory foretold in the beginning by the archangel Gabriel. Referring to the prayer in the thirteenth canto, one cannot help but notice the close analogy with the considerations that conclude Machiavelli's treatise on the principality. In the famous Chapter XXVI, the "Exhortatio ad capessendam italiam in libertatemque a barbaris vindicandam," the value of the new prince who rises to free Italy is associated, with a strong reference to the words of Chapter VI, to the historical "great examples", the first of which is Moses. So it is said that

Qui è disposizione grandissima: né può essere, dove è grande disposizione, grande difficoltà, pure che quella pigli delli ordini di coloro che io ho preposti per mira. Oltre a di questo, qui si veggono straordinari senza esempio, condotti da Dio: el mare si è aperto; una nube vi ha scorto il cammino; la pietra ha versato acque; qui è piovuto la manna. Ogni cosa è concorsa nella vostra grandezza. El rimanente dovete fare voi: Dio non vuole fare ogni cosa, per non ci torre el libero arbitrio e parte di quella gloria che tocca a noi.

<sup>55</sup> Id., *De principatibus* VI.

Those whom Machiavelli has «proposto per mira» are, in fact, Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and the other historical examples of principles by virtue («per virtù»). However, what now deserves attention are the «straordinari exempli senza eguali, guidati da Dio» and demonstrating His favor, that great disposition («grande disposizione») that guarantees the success of the enterprise: the references are exactly to the miracles of the *Exodus*, including manna and water from the rock, the examples that Godfrey, in his prayer, asks God to renew. The subsequent rain allows the captain to resume the mission and complete it, and represents, in effect, the Machiavellian occasion that shows how everything has favored the prince's enterprise («ogni cosa è concorsa alla vostra grandezza»). And it is clear that there can be no difficulty, provided that the prince “takes the orders of those I have set out to aim,” that is, the figures of history among which Moses stands out, the recipient of those miracles that would be renewed in favor of the new prince. Godfrey chooses to refer, in his conduct, precisely to Moses, to that Moses leader and political leader, to the virtuous prince Moses: he receives the same opportunity, the same miracles are renewed so that his success is possible. This is in no way a landing place: it is merely an incentive to the continuation of the action of the captain, who resumes with renewed strength the march towards the enterprise favored by Heaven. And the divine intervention itself is anything but a spontaneous and gratuitous gift but follows God's virtuous act, which succeeds in obtaining God's saving action. As in the episode of Argillano, where the divine hand offers only the

starting point from which Godfrey regains control and continues the action. Also in this sense, consistently with the note: «el rimanente dovete fare voi: Dio non vuole fare ogni cosa, per non ci torre el libero arbitrio e parte di quella gloria che tocca a noi».

The captain seizes the opportunities offered by Heaven and the signs of His favor and shows himself attentive to this from the first speech to the princes; then independently carries out the action until victory. This rich series of ideas aims to show the deep affinity that binds the character of Godfrey to the most illustrious of the great examples adduced by Machiavelli in the *Prince*: not simply, therefore, the Biblical prophet Moses but the Moses prince and politician admirably used by the Florentine secretary as a historical model in his two most important works. A connotation that fits perfectly with the main character of the Tassian poem, of which a reading is proposed just like those that Machiavelli defines princes or “rulers,” both definitions that - we tried to show - fit perfectly with the role and figure of Godfrey in *The Liberation*. His very election and the reasons that move him, his actions, the effects that he determines in the field make him in all respects an orderer, both of the community and of the various narrative drives within the work that the community itself embodies: politics and poetry are connected and equally ordered by the figure of Godfrey. It does not seem superfluous to suggest that several aspects justify the proposal that a significant model was offered to Tasso by the person who had theorized, in the historical and political sphere, this authorizing figure, exemplifying it with that Moses who all the more explicitly inspires the prince of the poem.

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