

*Machiavelli's*  
**THE PRINCE**

*A Bilingual Edition*

*Translated & Edited by*  
**Mark Musa**



✓  
*Machiavelli's*

---

# THE PRINCE

---

*A Bilingual Edition*

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

*Mark Musa*, INDIANA UNIVERSITY

the past conducted their affairs, because, as he says in Chapter vi:

. . . a prudent man should always take the path trodden by great men and imitate those who have been most outstanding; so that, if his own ingenuity does not come up to theirs, at least it will have the smell of it . . .

Machiavelli has no systematic theory of political morality, nor is he in search of one; in fact, he removes considerations of morality from the sphere of politics. The reader will notice how careful he is to stand at some distance from his characters and report on their actions, never moralizing on the "great men" he investigates.

Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* hastily in 1513 (perhaps between July and September), after he began working on the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy*. That the same man wrote two so dissimilar books has always disturbed some critics: the author of the *Discourses* emerges as an advocate of the republic while the author of *The Prince* advocates the principality. But the two works do not contradict each other if we see them as representing two different purposes: the one a treatise, the other a handbook.

How could the ideal republic hinted at in the *Discourses* possibly be realized in a politically chaotic and corrupt Italy? The sad condition of Italy in 1513 may have led Machiavelli to put aside theories and ideals and face the truth, the "*verità effettuale della cosa*." Strong leadership and organization, a redeemer to bring order to chaos, were necessary now if his ideal republic of the *Discourses* some day were to be realized. And so *The Prince*—a crying-out for action, for freedom from foreign domination, for reform and unification—was Machiavelli's answer to Italy's present needs. Because Machiavelli was seeking employment from the Medici when he wrote *The Prince*, dedi-

cating it to Lorenzo, does not mean that he wrote the book for self-aggrandizement. Only the opening dedication and some parts of the final chapter are meant to flatter the Medici; the intervening twenty-five chapters are devoid of any desire for selfish gain.

Not only the *Discourses* but Machiavelli's whole way of life make it clear that he considered a republic the best form of government, and the goal of human society the "common good." But the "effectual truth of the matter," things as they are, led him to advocate, through *The Prince*, the only kind of rule that he judged could serve his confused country during those desperate times.

Appearing frequently in all of Machiavelli's writings is that key word "*virtù*," which has posed problems for translator and critic alike. Scholars have tried their hand at defining "*virtù*" in a sentence or two, but no definition has caught its elusive significance. Most commentators are satisfied to call it "the human will in action"; Burckhardt's definition is more ambitious and elegant: "A union of force and ability, something that can be summed up in force alone, if, by force, one means human, not mechanical, force: will, and therefore force of ability."

There is no organized doctrine of "*virtù*" in the works of Machiavelli; the word must be examined and understood in its own special context, in the sentence or paragraph in which it occurs, and then, perhaps, it will reveal its particular meaning. I have found it necessary to use twelve different English words to translate "*virtù*," although many translators have been satisfied to render it as "virtue" in every instance. Only rarely does "virtue" capture the meaning Machiavelli intended. It may be helpful to list each instance in which the word appears, the number of times it is used in each chapter, and how I have chosen to translate it.

## Chapter I

- Virtù*
1. *et acquistonsi, o con le arme d' altri o con le proprie, o per fortuna o per virtù / and they are acquired either with the arms of others or with one's own, either through fortune or through ingenuity*

## Chapter III

1. *di godere el beneficio del tempo, ma sì bene quello della virtù e prudenzia loro / but rather they enjoyed the benefits of their ingenuity and prudence*

## Chapter IV

1. *Il che non è nato dalla molta o poca virtù del vincitore / This does not come about from greater or lesser ingenuity on the part of the victor*

## Chapter VI

1. *né alla virtù di quelli che tu imiti aggiugnere / nor arrive at the ingenuity of those they imitate*
2. *acciò che, se la sua virtù non vi arriva, almeno ne renda qualche odore / so that, if his own ingenuity does not come up to theirs, at least it will have the smell of it*
3. *conoscendo fino a quanto va la virtù del loro arco / aware of the capacity of their bow*
4. *secondo che più o meno è virtuoso colui che gli acquista / according to the greater or lesser ingenuity of the one who acquires them*
5. *presuppone o virtù o fortuna / presupposes either ingenuity or fortune*
6. *che per propria virtù e non per fortuna / by means of their own ingenuity and not by fortune*
7. *e senza quella occasione la virtù dello animo loro si sarebbe spenta / and without that occasion their very ingenuity would have been extinguished*
8. *e senza quella virtù la occasione sarebbe venuto invano / and without that ingenuity the occasion would have presented itself in vain*
9. *Non poteva Teseo dimostrare la sua virtù / Theseus could not have displayed his ingenuity*

6. *Qui è virtù grande nelle membra* / At present there is great strength in her members
7. *e per virtù e per fortuna* / by ingenuity and fortune
8. *per potere con la virtù italica* / so that with Italian strength
9. *Virtù contro a furore* / Ingenuity against rage

"*Virtù*" occurs fifty-nine times in *The Prince*; it appears three times as an adjective ("*virtuoso*") and once as an adverb ("*virtuosissimamente*"). On seventeen occasions it is coupled with "*fortuna*" (which appears fifty-one times in the book), and in every such coupling it can be translated in its broader meaning of "ingenuity." The word "ingenuity" seemed the most appropriate choice because by definition it combines aptness and skill with inventive power and cleverness in originating and contriving, and I cannot help feeling that Machiavelli's Prince is, above all, a creative artist giving form to his material: creating a work of art, which is the principality, and like that of most artists, seldom perfect. I feel that "virtue" for "*virtù*" can be used only three times in *The Prince*: in Chapter xi, where it occurs in the plural, and in Chapters xv and xvi, where the word occurs only once in each chapter.

One thing seems certain: Machiavelli's "*virtù*" has nothing in common with the medieval passive concept of "*virtù*" involving contemplation and prayer; indeed, it is the reverse: a concept of action involving both mind and body. And when it is not specifically *capacity, strategy, virtue, courage, power, efficacy, qualities, strength, talent, resources, or capability*, then it is *ingenuity*, a general term broad enough by its own definition to suggest some of the eleven more specific meanings of "*virtù*." +

My translation, unlike many recent ones, was not intended to make Machiavelli sound like a twentieth-century journalist. I have not broken his long and often involved sentences into a number of shorter ones, for

Machiavelli develops and extends an idea in the course of a sentence, juxtaposing not only important words but also phrases and entire clauses, sometimes for dramatic effect and sometimes for didactic reasons. His longer sentences can be confusing: his enthusiasm will overwhelm both his logic and grammar, and a translation should be faithful to the changes in tone and intensity. *The Prince* is by no means Machiavelli's most polished work, but, then, he did not mean it to be:

I have neither adorned nor filled this book with polished sentences, with rich and magnificent words, or with any other kind of rhetorical or superfluous ornamentation, the likes of which many writers are accustomed to using in describing and embellishing their material; for it was my desire that nothing distinguish my book or make it pleasing other than the unusualness of its material and the importance of its contents exclusively. . . .

## Indice

<i>Nicolaus Maclavellus ad Magnificum Laurentium Medicem</i>	xxiv
I Quot Sint Genera Principatuum et Quibus Modis Acquirantur	4
II De Principatibus Hereditariis	6
III De Principatibus Mixtis	8
IV Cur Darii Regnum Quod Alexander Occupaverat a Successoribus Suis Post Alexandri Mortem non Defecit	28
V Quomodo Administrandae Sunt Civitates vel Principatus, Qui, Antequam Occuparentur, Suis Legibus Vivebant	36
VI De Principatibus Novis Qui Armis Propriis et Virtute Acquiruntur	40
VII De Principatibus Novis Qui Alienis Armis et Fortuna Acquiruntur	48
VIII De His Qui Per Scelera ad Principatum Pervenere	66
IX De Principatu Civili	76

## Contents

INTRODUCTION	v
NOTE ON THE TEXT	xvii
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	xviii
<i>Niccolò Machiavelli to the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici</i>	1
I How Many Types of Principalities There Are and the Way They Are Acquired	5
II On Hereditary Principalities	7
III On Mixed Principalities	9
IV Why the Kingdom of Darius, Which Was Occupied by Alexander, Did Not, After the Death of Alexander, Rebel Against His Successors	29
V How Cities or Principalities That Lived by Their Own Laws Before They Were Occupied Should Be Governed	37
VI On New Principalities Acquired by Means of One's Own Arms and Ingenuity	41
VII On New Principalities Acquired with the Arms and Fortunes of Others	49
VIII On Those Who Have Become Princes Through Iniquity	67
IX On the Civil Principality	77
	xxi

X	Quomodo Omnium Principatum Vires Perpendi Debeant	86
XI	De Principatibus Ecclesiasticis	92
XII	Quot Sint Genera Militiae et de Mercenariis Militibus	98
XIII	De Militibus Auxiliariis, Mixtis et Propriis	110
XIV	Quod Principem Deceat Circa Militiam	120
XV	De His Rebus Quibus Homines et Praesertim Principes Laudantur aut Vituperantur	126
XVI	De Liberalitate et Parsimonia	130
XVII	De Crudelitate et Pietate; et An Sit Melius Amari Quam Timeri, Vel e Contra	136
XVIII	Quomodo Fides a Principibus Sit Servanda	144
XIX	De Contemptu et Odio Fugiendo	150
XX	An Arces et Multa Alla Quae Cotidie a Principibus Fiunt Utilia an Inutilia Sint	174
XXI	Quod Principem Deceat ut Egregius Habeatur	184
XXII	De His Quos a Secretis Principes Habent	194
XXIII	Quomodo Adulatores Sint Fugiendi	198
XXIV	Cur Italiae Principes Regnum Amiserunt	204
XXV	Quantum Fortuna in Rebus Humanis Possit, et Quomodo Illi Sit Occurrendum	208
XXVI	Exhortatio Ad Capessendam Italiam in Libertatemque a Barbris Vindicandam	216

X	How the Strength of All Principalities Should Be Determined	87
XI	On Ecclesiastical Principalities	93
XII	The Different Kinds of Troops and Mercenary Soldiers	99
XIII	On Auxiliary, Mixed and Native Troops	111
XIV	What a Prince Should Do with Regard to the Militia	121
XV	On Those Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, Are Praised or Blamed	127
XVI	On Generosity and Parsimony	131
XVII	On Cruelty and Compassion; and Whether It is Better to Be Loved Than Feared or the Opposite	137
XVIII	How a Prince Should Keep His Word	145
XIX	On Avoiding Being Disdained and Hated	151
XX	Whether Fortresses and Many Other Things Which Princes Use Frequently Are Useful or Harmful	175
XXI	How a Prince Should Act to Acquire Esteem	185
XXII	On the Private Counselors a Prince Has	195
XXIII	How Flatterers Are to Be Avoided	199
XXIV	Why the Princes of Italy Have Lost Their States	205
XXV	How Much Fortune Can Do in Human Affairs and How to Contend With It	209
XXVI	Exhortation to Take Hold of Italy and Liberate Her from the Barbarians	217



## Niccolò Machiavelli to the Magnificent

LORENZO DE' MEDICI<sup>1</sup>

It is customary, in most cases, for those who desire to win the favor of a Prince to present themselves to him with those things they cherish most or which they know please him most; hence, we often see Princes<sup>2</sup> presented with horses, arms, gold vestments, precious stones and similar adornments worthy of their greatness. Desiring, then, to offer myself to Your Magnificence with some proof of my devotion to you, I have not found among my possessions anything that I cherish more or value so much as my knowledge of the accomplishments of great men, which I learned through long experience in contemporary affairs and continuous study of antiquity; having very diligently and for a long time thought about and analyzed these accomplishments, and now having condensed them into a little book, I am sending them to Your Magnificence.

And although I regard this work unworthy of your consideration, I am nevertheless quite confident that your kindness will convince you to accept it, for I could not make you a greater gift than to give you the means to be able in very short time to understand all that which I, over many years<sup>3</sup> and with many difficulties and dangers, came to know and understand. I have neither adorned nor filled this book with polished sentences, with rich and magnificent words, or with any other kind of rhetorical or superfluous ornamentation, the likes of which many writers are accustomed to using in describing and embellishing their material; for it was my desire that nothing distinguish my book or make it pleasing other than the unusualness of its material and the importance of its con-

regolare e' governi de' principi; perchè, così come coloro che disegnano e paesi si pongono bassi nel piano a considerare la natura de' monti e de' luoghi alti e, per considerare quella de' bassi, si pongono alti sopra e monti; similmente, a conoscere bene la natura de' populi, bisogna essere principe, e a conoscere bene quella de' principi, bisogna essere popolare.

Pigli, adunque, Vostra Magnificenzia questo piccolo dono con quello animo che io lo mando; el quale se da quella fia diligentemente considerato e letto, vi conoscerà drento uno estremo mio desiderio, che Lei pervenga a quella grandezza che la fortuna e le altre sue qualità li promettano. E se Vostra Magnificenzia dallo apice della sua altezza qualche volta volgerà gli occhi in questi luoghi bassi, conoscerà quanto io indegnamente sopporti una grande e continua malignità di fortuna.

tents exclusively. I hope it will not be thought presumptuous if a man of low and inferior station dare to debate and regulate the government of princes; for, just as those persons who sketch landscapes place themselves in a low position on the plain in order to study the nature of the mountains and highlands, and in order to study the lowlands place themselves high on top of the mountains, in like fashion, in order to know well the nature of the people one must be a prince, and to know well the nature of princes one must be a common citizen.

Accept then, Your Magnificence, this little gift in the spirit that I send it; and if you deign to consider and read it with care, you will discover in it my utmost desire that you may reach that greatness which fortune and your own capacities predict for you. And if Your Magnificence from the summit of his high position will at some time move his eyes toward these lowlands, he will know to what extent I unjustly endure the great and continuous maleficence of fortune.

## NOTES

1. Lorenzo de' Medici (1492-1519), not to be confused with Lorenzo the Magnificent, succeeded Giuliano as ruler of Florence in 1513. *The Prince* had first been dedicated to Giuliano de' Medici, who ruled Florence from 1512-1513 and died in 1516. Machiavelli changed the dedication before 1517.

2. The plural "loro" would seem to arise from "uno Principe" in line 2: a casual switch from the singular to the plural (not easily rendered in English) is often found in Machiavelli's longer and involved sentences. Machiavelli is more concerned with what he says than how he says it.

3. Machiavelli was about forty-three when he wrote *The Prince*.

## De Principatibus

### *I Quot Sint Genera Principatum et Quibus Modis Acquirantur*

Tutti gli stati, tutti e domini che hanno avuto e hanno imperio sopra li uomini, sono stati e sono o republiche o principati. E principati sono: o ereditarii, de' quali el sangue del loro signore ne sia suto lungo tempo principe, o sono nuovi. E nuovi, o e' sono nuovi tutti, come fu Milano a Francesco Sforza, o e' sono come membri aggiunti allo stato ereditario del principe che li acquista, come è el regno di Napoli al re di Spagna. Sono questi domini così acquistati, o consueti a vivere sotto uno principe, o usi ad essere liberi; e acquistonsi o con le armi d' altri o con le proprie, o per fortuna o per virtù.

## On Principalities

### *I How Many Types of Principalities There Are and the Way They Are Acquired*

All the states, all the dominions that have had and still have power over men, were and still are either republics or principalities. Principalities are either hereditary, in which case the family of the prince has been ruling for generations, or they are new. And the new ones are either completely new, as was Milan for Francesco Sforza,<sup>1</sup> or they are like members joined to the hereditary state of the prince who acquires them, as is the kingdom of Naples for the King of Spain.<sup>2</sup> Dominions acquired in this manner are either accustomed to living under a prince or used to being free; and they are acquired either with the arms of others or with one's own, either through fortune or through ingenuity.

#### NOTES

1. Francesco Sforza (1401–1466), the son of Muzio Attendolo, married the daughter (Maria Bianca) of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan; at the latter's death Milan became a republic with Sforza at the head of the army, who, instead of defending Milan from the Venetians, secretly allied himself with them; then turning against the Ambrosian Republic, he took possession of Milan and declared himself her ruler in 1450.

2. Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Spain, had agreed upon the sharing of the reign of Naples with Louis XII in the Treaty of Granada (November 11, 1500); but Ferdinand broke the pact and stripped his ally of his share by reuniting Naples and Sicily to Spain with the title of Vicerame in 1504.

## II On Hereditary Principalities

I shall put aside any discussion of republics, since I discussed them at length once before.<sup>1</sup> I shall treat only the principality, developing as I go the outline mentioned above; and I shall argue how these principalities may be governed and maintained.

Let me say, then, that in hereditary states accustomed to the rule of their prince's family there are far fewer difficulties in maintaining them than in the new ones; for it would suffice simply not to transgress the ancestral practices, and then to adjust one's self according to unforeseen events; in this way, if such a prince is of average ability, he will always rule in his state, unless some unusual and inordinate force deprive him of it; and although he may be deprived of it, with the slightest mishap to the occupier, he will reclaim it.

We have in Italy, as an example, the Duke of Ferrara,<sup>2</sup> who held up against the assaults of the Venetians in 1484 and of Pope Julius in 1510 for no other reason than his ancestral reign in that dominion. Since a prince by birth has fewer reasons and less need to offend his subjects, it follows that he should be more loved, and if he has no extraordinary vices to make him hateful, it is understandable why he is naturally well liked by them. And in the antiquity and duration of his reign memories and the reasons for innovations are extinguished, because one change always leaves a denticulation<sup>3</sup> for the construction of another.

from the state for a time by Pope Julius II, who was against the King of France.

3. The word *addentellato* is a technical architectural term referring to a toothed wall left on a building so that another building may be built on to it. In light of the word *edificazione* ("construction") which follows, *addentellato* proves to be an effective word choice here.

### III *On Mixed Principalities*

But it is with the new principality that difficulties arise.<sup>1</sup> First, if it is not altogether new but rather an addition (so that the two together may be called mixed), its problems originate mainly from one inherent difficulty that exists in all new principalities: men willingly change masters, believing to better themselves; and this belief makes them take up arms against their master, but in this they deceive themselves, because eventually with experience they see that things have gotten worse. Problems stem from another natural and common necessity, which is that a prince will always offend his new subjects both with his soldiers and with the many other abuses that accompany his new conquest; as a result you have made enemies of all those you offended while occupying that principality, and you are not able to keep those friends that helped to put you in power, since you are incapable of satisfying them in the way they had expected, nor can you use drastic measures<sup>2</sup> against them, for you are obligated to them; because, though one may have the strongest of armies, one always needs the backing of the inhabitants to take over a province. For these reasons Louis XII, King of France,<sup>3</sup> quickly occupied Milan and quickly lost it; and the first time Ludovico's<sup>4</sup> troops alone were enough to take it from him, because those people who had opened the gates to him, finding themselves deceived in their beliefs and in that future good they had anticipated, could not put up with the affronts of the new prince.

It is certainly true that once those lands that have rebelled are conquered a second time, they are lost with more difficulty; for the master, taking advantage of the rebellion, is less hesitant in insuring his position by punishing offenders, exposing suspects, and strengthening himself in weak spots. So that, if in order for France to lose Milan the first time, only the person of a Duke Ludovico

threatening the borders was enough, in order to cause her to lose it a second time, the whole world<sup>5</sup> had to oppose her and wipe out her armies or drive them out of Italy; and this came about for the reasons mentioned above. In spite of this, both the first and second time it was taken away from her.

The general reasons for the first loss have been discussed; there remains to mention those for the second, and to see what solutions there were for the King of France, and those available to one who might be in the same situation, so that he might be able to keep a better hold over his conquest than did France. I say, then, that those dominions that once conquered are annexed to the long-established state of the conqueror are either of the same province and language or they are not. When they are, it is very easy to hold on to them, especially so when they are not accustomed to freedom; and to possess them securely one need only to have extinguished the family line of the former prince in power, because as far as other things are concerned, so long as their old way of life is preserved and there is no difference in customs, men will live peacefully: as we have seen in the case of Burgundy, Brittany, Gascony and Normandy,<sup>6</sup> which have been joined to France for so long a time; and although there is a certain dissimilarity in the language, nonetheless the customs are the same, and they have been able to get along together easily. And whoever takes possession of such lands and desires to hold on to them should keep two things in mind: the first, that the family line of the old prince must be extinguished; the other, that neither the laws nor the taxes be changed; as a result in a very short time they will become, together with the old principality, as one body.

But when dominions are acquired in a province that differs in language, customs and laws, it is here that diffi-

culties arise; and in this case one needs a great deal of good fortune and much zeal to hold on to them. And one of the best and most effective solutions would be for the person who has taken possession to go there to live. This move would make that possession more secure and more permanent: just as the Turk did with Greece;<sup>7</sup> for in spite of all the other precautions he took to hold on to that dominion, if he had not gone there to live, it would have been impossible for him to hold it. Because, living right there, one sees trouble from its start and can take care of it immediately; not living there, one hears about it when it has greatly increased and there is no longer any remedy. Besides this, the province would not be plundered by one's officials; the subjects would be satisfied in having direct recourse to the prince; this way, desiring to be good citizens, they have more reason to love him, and, desiring to be otherwise, more reason to fear him. Whatever outside force might want to invade that dominion would be more hesitant in undertaking it; so that the prince, living right there, can only with the greatest difficulty lose it.

The other and even better solution is to send colonies into one or two places that will serve as connecting links to your state; for it is imperative that either the prince do this or maintain a large cavalry and infantry. Colonies do not cost much, and at little or no cost on the part of the prince, he can send and maintain them; and he only hurts those whose fields and houses are taken and given to the new inhabitants, who are a very small part of that state; and those that he hurts, scattered and poor as they are, can never be a threat to him, and all the others remain on the one hand unharmed (and therefore they should be quiet), and on the other fearful of making a mistake, lest what happened to those who had been dispossessed might happen to them. I conclude that these colonies are

not expensive, they are more faithful, and they give less trouble; and those who are hurt can pose no threat, since they are poor and scattered, as I have said. About this it should be noted that men must be either pampered or done away with, because they will revenge themselves for a slight hurt, but for serious ones they cannot; so that any hurt done to a man should be the kind that leaves no fear of revenge. But by maintaining, instead of colonies, an army of men, one spends much more, for all the revenues of that state will be used up in guarding it, so that the gain turns into a loss; and far greater injury is done, because the whole state is hurt by the prince's army changing quarters from one place to another; everyone feels this inconvenience, and everyone becomes an enemy; and they are enemies that can do harm, for they remain, though conquered, in their own home. In every respect, therefore, this kind of defense is as useless as the other kind, the founding of colonies, is useful.

Furthermore, whoever is in a province that differs from his own in the ways just mentioned should make himself the head and protector of his less powerful neighbors and do all possible to weaken those who are strong, and he should be on his guard that, for whatever reason, no foreigner as powerful as himself enter there. And it will always happen that the foreigner will be brought in by those who are dissatisfied because of either excessive ambition or fear: as was seen once when the Aetolians brought the Romans into Greece;<sup>8</sup> and every other province the Romans entered, they were brought in by the inhabitants. What happens is that as soon as a powerful foreigner enters a province, all those who are less powerful cling to him, impelled by their envy of the one who has ruled over them; so that, in regard to these weaker powers, he has no difficulty whatever in winning them over, for all of them will immediately and gladly blend into the state



he has taken over. He has only to beware that they do not get hold of too much power and authority; and he can very easily, with his strength and their backing, put down those who are powerful, remaining, in everything, arbiter of that province. And whoever does not follow carefully this practice will soon lose what he has acquired; and while he holds it he will find it full of infinite difficulties and troubles.

In the provinces they took over, the Romans carefully followed these practices; they sent in colonies, kept the less powerful in check without increasing their strength, put down the powerful, and did not allow powerful foreigners to gain prestige there. And I shall let the province of Greece serve as my only example: the Romans kept a friendly check on the Achaeans and the Aetolians; the kingdom of Macedonia was put down; Antiochus<sup>9</sup> was driven out; nor were they ever induced by the merits of the Achaeans or the Aetolians to allow them any gain of territory; nor did the coaxing of Philip ever convince them to make him a friend without first putting him down; nor could the power of Antiochus make them consent to his holding any authority at all in that province. For the Romans did in these cases what all wise princes should do: they not only have to watch out for troubles at hand, but also for those ahead, and endeavor diligently to avoid them; for once trouble is foreseen, it can be easily remedied; however, if you wait for it to become evident, the medicine will be too late, for the disease will have become incurable. And what doctors say about a disease will apply here: that at the beginning the disease is easy to cure but difficult to recognize; but, as time goes on, not having at the start been recognized or treated, it becomes easy to recognize and difficult to cure. The same thing happens in affairs of state; for recognizing from afar

quando, per non li avere conosciuti, si lasciano crescere in modo che ognuno li conosce, non vi è più remedio.

Però e Romani, vedendo discosto gli inconvenienti, vi rimediorno sempre; e non li lasciorno mai seguire per fuggire una guerra, perchè sapevano che la guerra non si leva, ma si differisce a vantaggio di altri; però vollono fare con Filippo e Antioco guerra in Grecia, per non la avere a fare con loro in Italia; e potevano per allora fuggire l' una e l' altra; il che non volsero. Nè piacque mai loro quello che tutto dì è in bocca de' savii de' nostri tempi, di godere el beneficio del tempo, ma sì bene quello della virtù e prudenzia loro; perchè il tempo si caccia innanzi ogni cosa, e può condurre seco bene come male e male come bene.

Ma torniamo a Francia, ed esaminiamo se delle cose dette ne ha fatto alcuna; e parlerò di Luigi, e non di Carlo, come di colui che, per avere tenuta più lunga possessione in Italia, si sono meglio visti e sua progressi; e vedrete come egli ha fatto el contrario di quelle cose che si debbono fare per tenere uno stato in una provincia disforme.

El re Luigi fu messo in Italia dalla ambizione de' Viniziani, che volsero guadagnarsi mezzo lo stato di Lombardia per quella venuta. Io non voglio biasimare questo partito preso dal re; perchè, volendo cominciare a mettere uno piè in Italia, e non avendo in questa provincia amici, anzi sendoli, per li portamenti del re Carlo, serrate tutte le porte, fu forzato prendere quelle amicizie che poteva; e sarebbeli riuscito el partito ben preso, quando nelli altri maneggi non avessi fatto errore alcuno. Acquistata, adun-

(which is the gift of only a prudent ruler) the disorders that are taking form within, one can soon heal them; but when, not having been recognized, they are left to grow so that everyone recognizes them, there is no longer a remedy.

For this reason the Romans, sensing trouble from afar, always found a remedy; and they never allowed it to develop in order to avoid going to war, because they knew that war cannot be avoided but only postponed to the advantage of others; therefore, they decided to go to war with Philip and Antiochus in Greece in order not to have to fight them in Italy; and they could have, for the time being, avoided both the one and the other, but they did not want to. Not did they ever like what is constantly on the lips of our sages today, to enjoy the benefits of the present time, but rather they enjoyed the benefits of their ingenuity and prudence; for time brings out everything, and it can bring with it the good as well as the bad and the bad as well as the good.

But let us return to France and see if she did any of the things just mentioned; and I shall talk about Louis, not Charles,<sup>20</sup> and so about him whose development has been observed better because he held possession in Italy for a longer time:<sup>21</sup> and you will see that he did the opposite of those things that must be done in order to maintain one's rule in a foreign country.

King Louis was brought into Italy by the ambition of the Venetians, who by his coming wanted to win for themselves half of Lombardy.<sup>22</sup> I do not wish to condemn the enterprise undertaken by the king; for desiring to get a first foothold in Italy and having no friends in this country—furthermore, because of the actions of King Charles all the gates were closed to him—he was forced to make whatever friends he could; and this worthwhile enterprise would have been successful if he had not made any mis-

so that the ambitious and unhappy citizens of that province might have another to appeal to; and where he could have left a tributary king<sup>17</sup> in charge of that kingdom, he cast him out, putting one there who could, in turn, throw him out.

The desire to acquire is truly a very natural and common thing; and whenever men who can, do so, they are praised and not condemned; but when they cannot and want to do so just the same, herein lies the mistake and the condemnation. If France, then, with her own forces could have attacked Naples, she should have done so; if she could not, she should not have divided it. And if the division of Lombardy with the Venetians deserved to be excused in that it allowed Louis to get a foothold in Italy, the other division deserves to be condemned, for there is no excuse of necessity.

Louis, therefore, had made these five mistakes: he had extinguished the weaker powers; increased the power in Italy of a powerful force;<sup>18</sup> brought into that country a most powerful foreigner;<sup>19</sup> did not come to live in Italy; did not bring in colonies. Nevertheless, these mistakes, if he had lived, might not have hurt him if he had not made a sixth: that of depriving the Venetians of their power;<sup>20</sup> for if he had not made the Church powerful nor brought Spain into Italy, it would have been most sensible and necessary to put down the Venetians; but having taken those first steps, he never should have allowed them to be ruined; for while they remained powerful they always would have kept the others from attempting to take Lombardy, in part because the Venetians would not have allowed this unless they themselves were to become the rulers of Lombardy, and in part because the others would not have wanted to take it from France in order to give it to them, and they would not have had the

seguire uno disordine per fuggire una guerra; perchè la non si fugge, ma si differisce a tuo disavvantaggio. E se alcuni altri allegassero la fede che il re aveva obligata al papa, di fare per lui quella impresa per la risoluzione del suo matrimonio e il cappello di Roano; respondo con quello che per me di sotto si dirà circa la fede de' principi e come la si debbe osservare.

Ha perduto, adunque, el re Luigi la Lombardia per non avere osservato alcuno di quelli termini osservati da altri che hanno preso provincie e volute tenere. Nè è miracolo alcuno questo, ma molto ordinario e ragionevole. E di questa materia parlai a Nantes con Roano, quando el Valentino (che così era chiamato popularmente Cesare Borgia, figliuolo di papa Alessandro) occupava la Romagna; perchè, dicendomi el cardinale di Roano che li Italiani non si intendevano della guerra, io li risposi che e Franzesi non si intendevano dello stato; perchè, se se ne intendessono, non lascerebbono venire la Chiesa in tanta grandezza. E per esperienza si è visto che la grandezza, in Italia, di quella e di Spagna è stata causata da Francia, e la ruina sua causata da loro. Di che si cava una regola generale, la quale mai o raro falla: che chi è cagione che uno diventi potente, ruina; perchè quella potenza è causata da colui o con industria o con forza, e l'una e l'altra di queste due è sospetta a chi è diventato potente.

courage to provoke both of them. And if someone were to say: King Louis surrendered Romagna to Alexander and the kingdom of Naples to Spain in order to avoid going to war, I would answer with the arguments expressed above: that one must never permit disorder to develop in order to avoid going to war, because one does not avoid war but rather defers it to his own disadvantage. And if some others were to cite the promise that the King had made the Pope to undertake that enterprise in exchange for the annulment of his marriage<sup>21</sup> and the Cardinal's hat of Rouen,<sup>22</sup> I would answer with what I shall say further on concerning the promise of princes and how it should be observed.<sup>23</sup>

And so, King Louis lost Lombardy by not having observed any of the precepts observed by others who have taken over provinces and wished to hold on to them. Nor is this in any way a miracle, but very natural and reasonable. And I spoke about this matter with the Cardinal of Rouen at Nantes when Valentino (this was what Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander, was commonly called) was occupying Romagna:<sup>24</sup> for the Cardinal of Rouen telling me that the Italians had no understanding of war, I answered that the French had no understanding of politics; because if they did understand, they would not allow the Church to gain so much power. And through experience we have seen that the power of the Church and of Spain in Italy has been brought about by France, and that her ruin has been caused by them. From this we extract a general rule which never or rarely fails: that whoever is the cause of another's coming into power ruins himself, because that power is brought about by him either through cleverness or force; and both the one and the other of these two are suspect to the one who has come into power.

Lord of Faenza, Astorre Manfredi; Lord of Pesaro, Giovanni Sforza; Lord of Rimini, Pandolfo Malatesta; Lord of Camerino, Giulio Cesare Varano; Lord of Piombino, Jacopo iv d'Appiano. All of these little "signori" were expelled from the State or were killed by Valentino in Tuscany between 1500 and 1502.

15. Alexander vi, a Borgia, had newly reaffirmed the secular power of the Church, and had initiated for the work of his son Cesare a policy of penetration and predominance in central Italy. Louis xii, having just joined with Milan, sent aids to Pope Borgia, increasing the latter's prestige, which was already so great, and reducing his own power by losing the Venetians (his friends), who were jealous of the Church.

16. Treaty of Granada (1500).

17. Frederick of Aragon.

18. Pope Alexander vi.

19. Ferdinand of Spain.

20. Pope Julius ii organized the League of Cambrai (1508) to enlist the help of France, Spain, and the Empire against the Venetians.

21. His marriage to Jeanne, daughter of Louis xi of France.

22. Because of this promise Louis xii's favorite, George d'Amboise, was made a cardinal by Alexander in 1498.

23. See Chapter xviii.

24. The conversation took place at the court of France during Machiavelli's diplomatic mission there in 1500.

#### IV Why the Kingdom of Darius, Which Was Occupied by Alexander, Did Not, After the Death of Alexander, Rebel Against His Successors

Bearing in mind the difficulties one encounters in holding on to a newly acquired state, one might wonder how it happened that when Alexander the Great,<sup>1</sup> having become ruler of Asia in a few years and scarcely having occupied it, died—whereby it would seem reasonable for the entire state to rebel—Alexander's successors, nevertheless, managed to keep possession of it; and they had, in holding on to it, no other difficulty than that which originated among themselves from their own ambitions.<sup>2</sup> Let me answer by saying that all those principalities we know about are governed in two different ways: either by a prince with all the rest as his servants, who, as ministers, through his kindness and permission, help govern that kingdom; or by a prince and barons, who, not because of any kindness on the part of the master, but because of noble lineage, hold that position. Such barons as these have their own states and subjects who acknowledge them as masters and are naturally fond of them. Those states governed by a prince and his servants hold their prince in greater authority, for in all his province there is no one that may be acknowledged as a superior if not himself; and if they do obey any others, they do so as his minister and official, for whom they bear no special love.

Examples of these two different kinds of governments in our own day are the Turk and the King of France. The entire Turkish empire is governed by one master; all the rest are his servants; and dividing his kingdom into provinces,<sup>3</sup> he sends various administrators there, and he moves and changes them around as he sees fit. But the King of France is situated among a group of long-established nobles, acknowledged in that state by their subjects and loved by them: they have their hereditary rights; the

King cannot retract them without endangering himself. Whoever studies, then, each of these two states, will find that the difficulty is in taking possession of the Turkish state, but once it has been conquered it is very easy to hold on to. And so, to the contrary, you will in some respects find that it is easier to occupy the French state, but it is very difficult to hold on to it.

The reasons for the difficulty in being able to occupy the Turkish kingdom are that it is not possible to be called there by the rulers of that kingdom nor to hope, with the rebellion of those the ruler has around him, to facilitate your undertaking. And this all stems from the reasons mentioned above: since they are all slaves and dependent, it is more difficult to corrupt them; and even if they were to be corrupted, one cannot hope they will be very useful, unable as they are to attract followers for the reasons already mentioned. Therefore, whoever assaults the Turks must expect to find them entirely united, and it is to his advantage to rely more on his own strength than on their disunity. But if the ruler of that state were to be beaten and broken in battle so that he could not reform his troops, there is nothing else to be feared except the family of the prince; once it is extinguished, there remains nobody else to be feared, for the others have no standing with the people; and just as the victor before the victory could not place hope in them, so now, afterward, he need not fear them.

The opposite takes place in kingdoms governed like France, because you can enter these with ease, once you have won over some baron of the kingdom; for one always finds some unhappy people as well as those who desire a change; these people, for the reasons already given, can open the way to that state and make the victory easy for you. Then, the desire to hold on to it is accompanied by endless difficulties with both those

who have aided you and those you have oppressed; nor is it enough to extinguish the family of the prince, because there remain those nobles who make themselves heads of the new reactionary factions; and able neither to make them happy nor to extinguish them, you lose that state as soon as the occasion presents itself.

Now, if you will consider the kind of government Darius<sup>4</sup> had, you will find it similar to the Turkish kingdom; and so Alexander first had to overthrow it completely and defeat them in battle;<sup>5</sup> after this victory, with Darius dead, that state remained securely in the possession of Alexander for the reasons discussed above. And his successors, had they been united, could have enjoyed it with ease; for in that kingdom no commotions arose other than those they themselves incited. But in regard to states organized like France, it is impossible to keep hold of them with as much ease. On this account there arose the frequent rebellions of Spain, France and Greece against the Romans, all due to the numerous principalities that existed in those states: as long as the memory of these endured, the Romans were always insecure in their possession; but once their memory was extinguished, with the strength and permanence of the empire, they became sure possessors. Then afterward, when the Romans began fighting among themselves, each one was able to attract a following from those provinces, depending on the authority he had there; and since the family line of their old ruler had been extinguished, they acknowledged only the Romans. Considering all these things, therefore, no one at all should marvel at the facility with which Alexander held on to the state of Asia, or at the difficulties that others have had in retaining their possession, such as Pyrrhus<sup>6</sup> and many others. This does not come about from greater or lesser ingenuity on the part of the victor, but rather from the disparity of the situations.



## V *How Cities or Principalities That Lived by Their Own Laws Before They Were Occupied Should Be Governed*

When those states that are acquired, as I have said,<sup>1</sup> are accustomed to living by their own laws and in freedom, there are three ways to hold on to them: the first, to demolish them; the second, to go there in person to live; the third, to let them live by their own laws, obliging them to pay tribute and establishing therein a government consisting of a few people who will keep the state friendly toward you. For that government, having been created by that prince, knows that it cannot survive without his friendship and power, and it must do all possible to maintain them; and a city used to living in freedom is more easily held by means of its own citizens than in any other way, if you chose to preserve it.<sup>2</sup>

As examples there are the Spartans and the Romans. The Spartans held Athens and Thebes by establishing therein a government consisting of a few people, though eventually they lost both of them. The Romans, to hold on to Capua, Carthage and Numantia, destroyed them, and did not lose them; they wanted to keep Greece in almost the same way the Spartans kept it, making it free and leaving it with its own laws, and they did not succeed; so they were forced to destroy many of the cities in that province in order to hold on to it. For the truth is that there is no sure way of keeping possession of them, except by demolishing them. And whoever becomes master of a city accustomed to living in freedom and does not destroy it may expect to be destroyed by it; because this city can always have refuge, during a rebellion, in the name of liberty and its traditional institutions, neither of which, either with the passing of time or the acquiring of benefits, are ever forgotten. And no matter what one does or provides for, if one does not disunite or dis-

perse the inhabitants of such a city, they will not forget that name or those institutions, and immediately, in every case, they will resort to them, just as Pisa did after the hundred years that it had been held in servitude by the Florentines.<sup>3</sup> But when cities or provinces are used to living under a prince, and the family line of that prince has been extinguished, being on the one hand used to obeying while on the other not having their old prince, and not able to agree on a choice of one from among themselves, yet not knowing how to live in freedom, they are, as a result, slower in taking up arms, and a prince can, with greater ease, win them over and find security in them. But in the case of republics there is greater life, greater hatred, more desire for revenge; the memory of their ancient liberty will not and cannot allow them to rest; so that the surest way is to destroy them or take up residence there.

## NOTES

1. Referring in particular to Chapter III.
2. As opposed to destroying it, which is the first way.
3. Actually, Pisa was ruled by Florence for 88 years (1405-1494) and not one hundred—an example, though slight, of Machiavelli's frequent distortion of historical fact.

VI *De Principatibus Novis Qui Armis Propriis et Virtute Acquiruntur*

Non si maravigli alcuno se nel parlare che io farò de' principati al tutto nuovi e di principe e di stato, io addurrò grandissimi esempi; perchè, camminando gli uomini quasi sempre per le vie battute da altri, e procedendo nelle azioni loro con le imitazioni, nè si potendo le vie di altri al tutto tenere nè alla virtù di quelli che tu imiti aggiugnere, debbe uno uomo prudente entrare sempre per vie battute da uomini grandi, e quelli che sono stati eccellentissimi imitare, acciò che, se la sua virtù non vi arriva, almeno ne renda qualche odore; e fare come gli arcieri prudenti, a' quali, parendo el loco dove disegnano ferire troppo lontano, e conoscendo fino a quanto va la virtù del loro arco, pongono la mira assai più alta che il loco destinato, non per aggiugnere con la loro freccia a tanta altezza, ma per potere, con lo aiuto di sì alta mira, pervenire al disegno loro.

Dico, adunque, che ne' principati tutti nuovi, dove sia uno nuovo principe, si truova, a mantenerli, più o meno difficoltà, secondo che più o meno è virtuoso colui che gli acquista. E perchè questo evento di diventare, di privato, principe, presuppone o virtù o fortuna, pare che l'una o l'altra di queste dua cose mitighi, in parte, di molte difficoltà; nondimanco, colui che è stato meno in su la fortuna, si è mantenuto più. Genera ancora facilità essere il principe costretto, per non avere altri stati, venire personalmente ad abitarvi. Ma per venire a quelli che per propria virtù, e non per fortuna, sono diventati principi, dico che li più eccellenti sono Moisè, Ciro, Romulo, Teseo e simili. E benchè di Moisè non si debba ragionare, sendo suto uno mero esecutore delle cose che li erano ordinate da Dio, tamen debbe essere ammirato solum per quella grazia che lo faceva degno di parlare con Dio. Ma consideriamo Ciro

VI *On New Principalities Acquired by Means of One's Own Arms and Ingenuity*

No one should be surprised if, in my discussion of principalities that are completely new in respect to their prince and composition, I make use of the most outstanding examples; since men almost always walk the path made by others and conduct their affairs through imitation, although they are not altogether able to stay on the path of others nor arrive at the ingenuity of those they imitate, a prudent man should always take the path trodden by great men and imitate those who have been most outstanding;<sup>1</sup> so that, if his own ingenuity does not come up to theirs, at least it will have the smell of it; and he should act like those prudent archers, who, when the target they are aiming at seems too far off, aware of the capacity of their bow, set their sight a good deal higher than the desired target, not to reach such a height with their arrow but rather to be able, with the help of aiming high, to reach their target.

I say, then, that in entirely new principalities, where there is a new prince, one will find more or less difficulty in maintaining them according to the greater or lesser ingenuity of the one who acquires them. And since this event of transition from ordinary citizen to prince presupposes either ingenuity or fortune, it would seem that either the one or the other of these two things should, to some extent, mitigate many of the difficulties; nevertheless, he who has trusted less in fortune has held on to his position best. Things are made easier also by the fact that the prince, having no other state to rule, is forced to come and live there in person. But to come to those who, by means of their own ingenuity and not by fortune, have become princes, let me say that the most outstanding are Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, Theseus and the like. And although one should not discuss Moses, for he was a

mere executor of the things God had commanded, he still should be admired if only for that grace which made him worthy of speaking with God.<sup>2</sup> But let us consider Cyrus<sup>3</sup> and the others who acquired or founded kingdoms: you will find them all admirable; and if their particular actions and institutions are examined, they do not appear to differ from those of Moses, who had so great a preceptor. And examining their actions and lives, we see that from fortune they received nothing but the occasion; which in turn offered them the material they could then shape into whatever form they pleased; and without that occasion their very ingenuity would have been extinguished, and without that ingenuity the occasion would have come in vain.

Therefore it was necessary for Moses to find the people of Israel in Egypt slaves and oppressed by the Egyptians, so that they, in order to escape this servitude, might be disposed to following him. It was imperative that Romulus<sup>4</sup> not remain in Alba and for him to be exposed at birth, so that he might become king of Rome and founder of that nation. It was requisite that Cyrus find the Persians dissatisfied with the empire of the Medes and the Medes soft and effeminate through years of peace. Theseus<sup>5</sup> could not have displayed his ingenuity if he had not found the Athenians dispersed. These occasions, then, made these men successful, and their outstanding ingenuity made that occasion known to them; whereby their nations were made renowned and they became prosperous.

Those who, like these men, become princes by means of ingenuity, acquire their principality with difficulty, but hold on to it with ease; and the difficulties they encounter in acquiring the principality arise, in part, from the new institutions and methods they are forced to introduce in order to establish their state and their security. And it should be kept in mind that there is nothing more diffi-

XV *De His Rebus Quibus Homines et Praesertim Principes Laudantur aut Vituperantur*

Resta ora a vedere quali debbano essere e modi e governi di uno principe con sudditi o con li amici. E perchè io so che molti di questo hanno scritto, dubito, scrivendone ancora io, non essere tenuto prosuntuoso, partendomi massime, nel disputare questa materia, dalli ordini delli altri. Ma sendo l'intento mio scrivere cosa utile a chi la intende, mi è parso più conveniente andare dietro alla verità effettuale della cosa, che alla imaginazione di essa. E molti si sono imaginati republiche e principati che non si sono mai visti nè conosciuti essere in vero; perchè egli è tanto discosto da come si vive a come si dovrebbe vivere, che colui che lascia quello che si fa per quello che si dovrebbe fare impara piuttosto la ruina che la preservazione sua; perchè uno uomo che voglia fare in tutte le parte professione di buono, conviene ruini infra tanti che non sono buoni. Onde è necessario a uno principe, volendosi mantenere, imparare a potere essere non buono, e usarlo e non l'usare secondo la necessità.

Lasciando, adunque, indietro le cose circa uno principe imagnate, e discorrendo quelle che sono vere, dico che tutti li uomini, quando se ne parla, e massime e principi, per essere posti più alti, sono notati di alcune di queste qualità che arrecano loro o biasimo o laude. E questo è che alcuno è tenuto liberale, alcuno misero (usando uno termine toscano, perchè avaro in nostra lingua è ancora colui che per rapina desidera di avere; misero chiamiamo noi quello che si astiene troppo di usare il suo); alcuno è tenuto donatore, alcuno rapace; alcuno crudele, alcuno pietoso; l'uno fedifrago, l'altro fedele; l'uno effeminato e pusillanime, l'altro feroce e animoso; l'uno umano, l'altro superbo; l'uno lascivo, l'altro casto;

XV *On Those Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, Are Praised or Blamed*

Now there remains to be seen what ought to be the criteria and actions of a prince in dealing with his subjects and friends. And because I know that many have written about this, I am afraid, by writing about it again, that I shall be thought presumptuous, all the more so for departing, in my discussion of this material, from the procedures of others. But my intention being to write something useful for whoever understands it, it seemed to me more appropriate to pursue the effectual truth of the matter rather than its imagined one. And many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in reality; for there is such a gap between how one lives and how one should live that he who neglects what is being done for what should be done will learn his destruction rather than his preservation; for a man who wishes to profess goodness at all times must fall to ruin among so many who are not good. Whereby it is necessary for a prince who wishes to maintain his position to learn how not to be good, and to use it or not according to necessity.

Putting aside, then, the imagined things concerning a prince, and taking into account those that are true, let me say that all men, when they are spoken of, and especially princes, since they are on a higher level, are judged by some of these qualities which bring them blame or praise. And this is why some are considered to be generous, others stingy (using a Tuscan word, since "avaricious" in our language is still used to refer to one whose desire involves robbing others; we call "stingy" that one who over-refrains from using what he has); some are considered givers, others graspers, some cruel, others merciful; one treacherous, another faithful; one effeminate and cowardly, another vigorous and courageous; one friendly,

l'uno intero, l'altro astuto; l'uno duro, l'altro facile; l'uno grave, l'altro leggiere; l'uno religioso, l'altro incredulo, e simili. E io so che ciascuno confesserà che sarebbe laudabilissima cosa in uno principe trovarsi, di tutte le soprascritte qualità, quelle che sono tenute buone; ma perchè le non si possono avere nè interamente osservare, per le condizione umane che non lo consentono, gli è necessario essere tanto prudente che sappi fuggire l'infamia di quelli vizii che li torrebbero lo stato, e da quelli che non guene tolgano, guardarsi, se gli è possibile; ma non possendo, vi si può con meno rispetto lasciare andare. Et etiam non si curi di incorrere nella infamia di quelli vizii senza quali e' possa difficilmente salvare lo stato; perchè, se si considererà bene tutto, si troverà qualche cosa che parrà virtù, e, seguendola, sarebbe la ruina sua; e qualcuna altra che parrà vizio, e, seguendola, ne riesce la securtà e il bene essere suo.

another haughty; one man lascivious, another pure; one sincere, another cunning; one severe, another lenient; one man serious-minded, another frivolous; one religious, another unbelieving, and the like. And I know everyone will agree that it would be a very praiseworthy thing to find in a prince all of the qualities mentioned above that are considered good; but since it is impossible to have and observe all of them, for human nature does not allow it, the prince must be prudent enough to know how to escape the infamy of those vices that would lose him his state, and be on his guard against those that will not lose it for him, if this be possible; but if it prove impossible, he need not be too troubled about foregoing them. And furthermore, he must not be concerned with incurring the infamy of those vices without which it would be difficult to save his state; because taking all carefully into account, he will discover that something that appears to be a virtue, if pursued, will result in his ruin; while some other thing that appears to be a vice, if pursued, will bring about his security and well-being.

are considered to be  
a vice

mate reasons to break promises are never lacking. Of this an infinite number of present-day examples could be noted, indicating how many peace treaties, how many promises have been made null and void by the unfaithfulness of princes: and he who has known best how to use the fox has come to a better end. But one must know how to disguise this nature well, and how to be a fine liar and hypocrite; and men are so simple-minded and so dominated by their present needs that one who deceives will always find one who will allow himself to be deceived.

There is one of these recent examples I do not wish to be silent about. Alexander VI did nothing else, he thought about nothing else, except to deceive men, and he always found the occasion to do it. And never was there a man more forceful in his assertions, and who affirmed a thing with more promises who kept his word less; nevertheless, the deceits he planned were always successful, because he was well acquainted with this facet of life.

It is not necessary, then, for a prince to have all of the qualities mentioned above, but it is certainly necessary that he appear to have them. In fact, I would go so far as to say this, that having them and observing them at all times, they are harmful; and appearing to have them, they are useful; for example, appearing to be compassionate, faithful, humane, upright, religious, and being so; but his mind should be disposed in such a way that should it become necessary not to be so, he will be able and know how to change to the contrary. And it must be understood that a prince, and in particular a new prince, cannot observe all those things by which men are considered good, for it is often necessary, in order to maintain the state, to act against your word, against charity, against kindness, against religion. And so, he must have a mind ready to turn itself according as the winds of fortune and the fluctuation of things command him, and, as I said

above, he must not separate himself from the good, if he is able, but he must know how to take up evil, should it become necessary.

A prince, therefore, should take great care never to say a single thing that is not infused with the five qualities mentioned above; he should appear, when seen and heard, to be all compassion, all faithfulness, all integrity, all kindness, all religion. And nothing is more essential than to appear to have this last quality. And men, in general, judge more according to their eyes than their hands; since everyone is in a position to observe, just a few to touch. Everyone sees what you appear to be, few touch what you are; and those few do not dare oppose the opinions of the many who have the majesty of the state defending them; and with regard to the actions of all men, and especially with princes where there is no court of appeal, we must look at the final result. Let a prince, then, conquer and maintain the state; his methods will always be judged honorable and they will be praised by all; because the ordinary people are always taken by the appearance and the outcome of a thing; and in the world there is nothing but ordinary people; and there is no room for the few while the many have a place to lean on. A certain prince<sup>2</sup> in our own time, whose name is better left unmentioned, preaches nothing but peace and good faith, and he is exceedingly hostile to both of them; and if he had put both of them into practice on more than one occasion they would have lost him either his reputation or his state.

#### NOTES

1. A Greek mythological figure, half horse and half man, he was the son of Saturn and the nymph Philyra.
2. Ferdinand the Catholic.



Da queste cagioni sopradette nacque che Marco, Pertinace e Alessandro, sendo tutti di modesta vita, amatori della iustizia, inimici della crudeltà, umani, benigni, ebono tutti, da Marco in fuori, tristo fine. Marco solo visse e morì onoratissimo, perchè lui succedè allo imperio iure hereditario, e non aveva a riconoscere quello nè da' soldati nè da' populi; di poi, sendo accompagnato da molte virtù che lo facevano venerando, tenne sempre, mentre che visse, l'uno ordine e l'altro intra e termini sua, e non fu mai nè odiato nè disprezzato. Ma Pertinace, creato imperatore contro alla voglia de' soldati, li quali, sendo usi a vivere licenziosamente sotto Commodo, non poterono sopportare quella vita onesta alla quale Pertinace gli voleva ridurre, onde avendosi creato odio, e a questo odio aggiunto el disprezzo sendo vecchio, ruinò ne' primi principii della sua amministrazione.

E qui si debbe notare che l'odio s'acquista così mediantemente le buone opere, come le triste; e però, come io dissi di sopra, volendo uno principe mantenere lo stato, è spesso forzato a non essere buono; perchè, quando quella università, o popolo o soldati o grandi che sieno, della quale tu iudichi, per mantenerti, avere bisogno, è corrotta, ti conviene seguire l'umore suo per satisfarle; e allora le buone opere ti sono nimiche. Ma vegnamo ad Alessandro; il quale fu di tanta bontà che, intra le altre laude che li sono attribuite, è questa: che in quattordici anni che tenne lo imperio, non fu mai morto da lui alcuno iniudicato; nondimanco, sendo tenuto effeminato e uomo che si lasciassi governare alla madre, e per questo venuto in disprezzo, conspirò in lui lo esercito, e ammazzollo.

with the people; nevertheless, this turned out to be for them either useful or not, according to whether that prince knew how to maintain his standing with them.

For the reasons mentioned above it happened that Marcus, Pertinax and Alexander, all of whom led restrained lives, were lovers of justice, enemies of cruelty, genial and kind, all, except for Marcus, came to a sad end. Marcus<sup>9</sup> alone lived and died with great esteem, because he had succeeded to the empire with hereditary rights and did not have to be grateful for it either to the soldiers or the people; then, endowed with many qualities that made him respected, he always held, while he was alive, both the one faction and the other within their bounds, and he was never hated or disdained. But Pertinax<sup>9</sup> was made Emperor against the will of the soldiers, who, since they were accustomed to licentious living under Commodus, could not put up with that decent way of life to which Pertinax wished to reduce them, whereby having brought upon himself this hatred to which was added contempt, for he was old, he came to ruin at the very beginning of his administration.

And here it should be noted that hate may be acquired by way of good deeds as by bad ones: and so, as I said above, if a prince wishes to hold on to the state, he is often forced into not being good; for, whenever that group which you think you need to sustain you is corrupt, whether it be the people or the soldiers or the nobles, it is to your advantage to adopt their disposition in order to satisfy them; and then good deeds are your enemies. But let us come to Alexander:<sup>10</sup> he was of such goodness that among the other praiseworthy things ascribed to him there is this one, that during the fourteen years that he held the empire no one was put to death by him without a trial; however, since he was considered effeminate, and a man who allowed himself to be governed by his mother,

Discorrendo ora, per opposito, le qualità di Commodo, di Severo, Antonino Caracalla e Massimino, li troverete crudelissimi e rapaccissimi; li quali, per soddisfare a' soldati, non perdonarono ad alcuna qualità di iniuria che ne' populi si potessi commettere; e tutti, eccetto Severo, ebbono triste fine. Perchè in Severo fu tanta virtù che, mantenendosi e soldati amici, ancora che i populi fussino da lui gravati, possè sempre regnare felicemente; perchè quelle sua virtù lo facevano nel conspetto de' soldati e de' populi sì mirabile, che questi rimanevano quodam modo attoniti e stupidi, e quelli altri reverenti e soddisfatti.

E perchè le azioni di costui furono grandi e notabile in uno principe nuovo, io voglio mostrare brevemente quanto bene seppe usare la persona della golpe e del lione; le quali nature io dico di sopra essere necessarie imitare a uno principe. Conosciuto Severo la ignavia di Giuliano imperatore, persuase al suo esercito, del quale era in Stiavonia capitano, che gli era bene andare a Roma a vendicare la morte di Pertinace, el quale da' soldati pretoriani era suto morto. E sotto questo colore, senza mostrare di aspirare allo imperio, mosse lo esercito contro a Roma, e fu prima in Italia che si sapessi la sua partita. Arrivato a Roma, fu dal senato, per timore, eletto imperatore e morto Giuliano. Restava, dopo questo principio, a Severo due difficoltà, volendosi insignorire di tutto lo stato: l'una, in Asia dove Pescennio Nigro, capo delli eserciti asiatici, si era fatto chiamare imperatore; e l'altra in ponente, dove era Albino, quale ancora lui aspirava allo imperio. E perchè iudicava pericoloso scoprirsi inimico a tutti a dua, deliberò di assaltare Nigro e ingannare Albino. Al quale scrisse come, sendo dal senato eletto imperatore, voleva partecipare quella dignità con lui; e

for this reason he came to be disdained, and the army conspired against him and murdered him.

Discussing now, in contrast, the characters of Commodus, Severus, Antonius Caracalla and Maximinus, you will find them very cruel and extremely rapacious; in order to satisfy the soldiers they did not abstain from inflicting all kinds of injury on the people; and all of them, except Severus,<sup>11</sup> came to a sad end. Because Severus possessed such ingenuity that, maintaining the soldiers as friends even though the people were oppressed by him, he was always able to reign successfully; for those qualities of his made him, in the eyes of the soldiers and the people, so admirable that the former were astonished and stunned and the others respectful and satisfied.

And since his actions were so outstanding and noteworthy for a new prince, I wish to show briefly how well he knew how to employ the nature of the fox and the lion: it is necessary, as I say above,<sup>12</sup> for a prince to imitate such natures. When Severus learned of the indolence of the emperor Julianus, he persuaded his troops, of which he was in command in Slavonia, that it would be a good thing to go to Rome to vindicate the death of Pertinax, who had been murdered by the Pretorian guards. And under this pretext, without seeming to aspire to the empire, he led the army against Rome; and he was in Italy before his departure was known. After his arrival in Rome, the senate, out of fear, elected him emperor and killed Julianus. There remained, after this beginning, two difficulties for Severus if he wished to become master of the entire state: one in Asia, where Pescennius Niger, commander of the Asiatic army, had himself proclaimed emperor; and the other in the west where there was Albinus, who also aspired to the empire. And since he thought it dangerous to show himself hostile to both of them, he decided to attack Niger and deceive Albinus.

He wrote to the latter saying that, having been elected emperor by the senate, he wanted to share that dignity with him; and he sent him the title of Cesar and, with the consent of the senate, took him as his co-leader: these things were accepted by Albinus as the truth. But after Severus had conquered and killed Niger and pacified things in the east, returning to Rome, he complained to the senate that Albinus, not very grateful for the favors received from him, had treacherously sought to murder him, and for this reason it would be necessary for him to go and punish his ingratitude. Then he went to seek him out in France, and took both his state and his life.

Whoever, therefore, examines carefully the actions of this man will find him a very fierce lion and a most cunning fox; he will see that he was feared and respected by everyone and not hated by the troops; and he will not be surprised if he, a new man, was able to maintain so great an empire; for his enormous reputation always protected him from that hatred that the people could have conceived against him because of his plundering. Now Antonius,<sup>13</sup> his son, was also a man who had excellent points that made him admirable in the eyes of the people and pleasing to the soldiers; for he was a military man, very able to put up with all kinds of exertion, disdainful of any fancy food and of every other kind of luxurious living: this made him loved by all the troops; nevertheless his ferocity and cruelty was so great and so unheard of—having, after innumerable individual slayings, put to death a large part of the Roman populace and all of Alexandria's—that he became exceedingly hateful to all the world. And he began to be feared also by those he had around him; so that he was murdered by a centurion in the midst of his army. Wherefore it should be noted that deaths such as these, that result from the deliberation of a determined individual, are unavoidable for princes; for anyone who

perchè le sono rarissime. Debbe solo guardarsi di non fare grave iniuria ad alcuno di coloro de' quali si serve e che gli ha d'intorno al servizio del suo principato: come aveva fatto Antonino, il quale aveva morto contumeliosamente uno fratello di quel centurione, e lui ogni giorno minacciava; tamen lo teneva a guardia del corpo suo; il che era partito temerario e da ruinarvi come li intervenne.

Ma vegnamo a Commodo; al quale era facilità grande tenere lo imperio, per averlo iure hereditario, sendo figliuolo di Marco; e solo li bastava seguire le vestigie del padre, e a' soldati e a' populi avrebbe satisfatto. Ma sendo d'animo crudele e bestiale, per potere usare la sua rapacità ne' populi, si volse a intrattenere li eserciti e farli licenziosi; dall'altra parte, non tenendo la sua dignità, discendendo spesso ne' teatri a combattere co' gladiatori e facendo altre cose vilissime e poco degne della maestà imperiale, diventò contennendo nel conspetto de' soldati. Ed essendo odiato dall'una parte e disprezzato dall'altra, fu conspirato in lui, e morto.

Restaci a narrare le qualità di Massimino. Costui fu uomo bellicosissimo; ed essendo li eserciti infastiditi della mollizie di Alessandro, del quale ho di sopra discorso, morto lui, lo elessero allo imperio. Il quale non molto tempo possedè, perchè dua cose lo feciono odioso e contennendo: l'una, essere vilissimo per avere già guardato le pecore in Tracia (la qual cosa era per tutto notissima e li faceva una grande dedignazione nel conspetto di qualunque); l'altra, perchè, avendo nello ingresso del suo principato differito lo andare a Roma ed entrare nella pos-

is not concerned about dying can do him harm; but the prince need not be too afraid of them, for they are very rare. He need only be on the alert not to inflict serious injury on anyone who serves him or whom he has around him in the service of the principality: just as Antonius had done when he shamefully put to death the brother of that centurion; and he would threaten him every day despite the fact that he kept him as a bodyguard—this was a rash undertaking and, as it happened, brought about his downfall.

But let us come to Commodus,<sup>14</sup> for whom it was very easy to hold on to the empire, since he acquired it through hereditary right, being the son of Marcus; and it would have been enough merely for him to follow in the footsteps of his father to satisfy the soldiers and the people. But being a cruel and brutal individual, in order to practice his rapacity on the people he turned to indulging the armies and made them licentious; on the other hand, in not maintaining his dignity by frequently descending into the arena to fight with the gladiators and by doing other very vile things hardly worthy of the imperial majesty, he became contemptible in the eyes of the soldiers. And being hated on the one side and disdained on the other, he was conspired against and killed.

There remains to tell of the qualities of Maximinus.<sup>15</sup> He was a very warlike person, and since the armies were annoyed with the effeminacy of Alexander, which I discussed above, they elected him to the empire after Alexander's death. He was not in possession of it very long, for two things made him hateful and disdained: one, his base origin, having at one time herded sheep in Thrace (this fact was well known everywhere and caused him to be greatly disdained in the eyes of everyone); the other, because, at the beginning of his reign having deferred

his trip to Rome to take possession of the imperial throne, he gave the impression of being extremely cruel, having through his prefects, in Rome and in all parts of the empire, exercised numerous cruelties. So that, with the entire world moved by disdain for the baseness of his origin and the hatred caused by fear of his ferocity, Africa rebelled first, then the senate with all the people of Rome; and all of Italy conspired against him. His own army joined with them, for, while besieging Aquileia and finding the battle difficult, disgusted with his cruelty, and seeing that he had so many enemies, they feared him less and killed him.

I shall not discuss Heliogabalus<sup>16</sup> nor Macrinus<sup>17</sup> nor Julianus<sup>18</sup> who, because they were thoroughly contemptible, were soon done away with; rather, I shall come to the conclusion of this discourse by saying that the princes of our time have less of this difficulty of satisfying the soldiers in their states by inordinate means; for, though certain considerations should be shown toward them, any difficulties are quickly resolved, for none of these princes have standing armies that are connected with the government and the administration of the provinces as were the armies of the Roman Empire. And so, if at one time it was necessary to satisfy the soldiers more than the people, it was because the soldiers could do more than the people; now it is more necessary for all princes, except the Turk and the Sultan, to satisfy the people rather than the soldiers, because the people can do more than the soldiers. I make an exception of the Turk, because he always keeps around him twelve thousand foot soldiers and fifteen thousand horsemen, on whom depend the security and the strength of his realm, and it is necessary that all other considerations be secondary to that ruler's maintaining their friendship. Similarly with the realm of the

## XX *Whether Fortresses and Many Other Things Which Princes Use Frequently Are Useful or Harmful*

Some princes, in order to hold on to the state securely, have disarmed their subjects; some others have kept their conquered territories divided into factions; some have cultivated hostilities against their very selves; some others have turned to winning over those who were suspect at the beginning of their reign; some have constructed fortresses; some have torn them down and destroyed them. And even though one cannot formulate a definite precept in regard to all these things without considering the particulars of those states that had to adopt some similar procedure, I shall nevertheless speak in as general terms as the subject will allow.

Now there has never been a time when a new prince has disarmed his subjects; on the contrary, when he has found them disarmed, he has always armed them, because, once armed, those arms become yours; those you find suspicious become loyal; and those who were loyal continue to be so, and from your subjects they become your partisans. But since not all your subjects can be armed, when those you arm are favored, you can deal more safely with the others; and the difference of treatment they recognize on their behalf makes them obliged to you; the others forgive you, judging that those who are subject to more danger and more responsibility must be more deserving. But when you disarm them, you begin to offend them; you show you have no trust in them either out of fear or lack of confidence: and both of these opinions generate hate against you. And since you cannot remain unarmed, you will have to turn to mercenary troops, who are of that caliber mentioned previously; and even if they were good, they could not be strong enough to defend you from powerful enemies and from untrustworthy subjects. So, as I have said, a new

metteranno simili divisioni; perchè le fanno solo profitto a tempo di pace, potendosi, mediante quelle, più facilmente maneggiare e sudditi; ma venendo la guerra, mostra simile ordine la fallacia sua.

Sanza dubbio e principi diventano grandi quando superano le difficoltà e le opposizioni che sono fatte loro; e però la fortuna, massime quando vuole fare grande uno principe nuovo, il quale ha maggiore necessità di acquistare reputazione che uno ereditario, li fa nascere de' nimici, e falli fare delle imprese contro, acciò che quello abbi cagione di superarle e, su per quella scala che gli hanno porta e nimici sua, salire più alto. Però molti iudicano che uno principe savio debbe, quando e' ne abbi la occasione, nutrirsi con astuzia qualche inimicizia, acciò che, oppresso quella, ne seguiti maggiore sua grandezza.

Hanno e principi, et praesertim quelli che sono nuovi, trovato più fede e più utilità in quelli uomini che nel principio del loro stato sono suti tenuti sospetti, che in quelli che nel principio erano confidenti. Pandolfo Petrucci, principe di Siena, reggeva lo stato suo più con quelli che li furono sospetti che con gli altri. Ma di questa cosa non si può parlare largamente, perchè la varia secondo el subietto. Solo dirò questo: che quelli uomini, che nel principio di uno principato erano stati inimici, che sono di qualità che a mantenersi abbino bisogno di appoggiarsi, sempre el principe con facilità grandissima se li potrà guadagnare; e loro maggiormente sono forzati a servirlo con fede, quanto conoscano essere loro più necessario cancellare con le opere quella opinione sinistra che si aveva di loro. E così el principe ne trae sempre più utilità, che di coloro che, servendolo con troppa sicurtà, straccurono le cose sua.

indicate weakness in the prince: for in a strong principality such divisions would never be permitted, since they are profitable only in times of peace, allowing the subjects by their means to be controlled more easily; but with the coming of war such a policy shows its fallacy.

Without a doubt princes become great when they overcome the difficulties and oppositions imposed on them; and so fortune, especially when it wants to increase the prestige of a new prince, who has more need of acquiring a reputation than does a hereditary one, creates enemies for him and makes them take action against him, so that he will have reason to overcome them and climb higher up the ladder his enemies have brought him. Therefore many hold that a wise prince, when he has the opportunity, should shrewdly cultivate some hostility, so that, in stamping it out, his greatness is augmented.

Princes, and primarily those who are new, have found more loyalty and usefulness in those men who at the beginning of their reign were held in suspicion than in those who at the beginning were trusted. Pandolfo Petrucci,<sup>2</sup> prince of Siena, governed his state more by means of those who had been suspect than by the others. But about this matter one cannot speak in general terms, because it varies according to the case. I shall say only this: that the prince will always with great ease be able to win over those men who at the start of a principality had been enemies, the kind that in order to maintain themselves must have support; and they are all the more obliged to serve him faithfully inasmuch as they realize the necessity of cancelling, through their deeds, that bad impression he held of them; and in this way the prince will always derive more usefulness from them than from those who, in serving him with too much security, neglect his interests.

## XXI *How a Prince Should Act to Acquire Esteem*

Nothing makes a prince more esteemed than great enterprises and evidence of his unusual abilities. In our own times we have Ferdinand of Aragon, the present king of Spain. This man can almost be called a new prince, because he rose with fame and glory from a weak king to the foremost king of Christendom; and if you will examine his accomplishments you will find them all very great and some of them extraordinary. Early in his reign he attacked Granada,<sup>1</sup> and that enterprise was the foundation of his state. At first, he carried on the campaign while things were peaceful, without fear of being impeded: he kept the minds of the Barons of Castille<sup>2</sup> occupied with it, and they, concentrating on that war, did not think about changes at home. And he acquired, in the meanwhile, prestige and control over them without their knowing it; he was able, with the money of the church and the people, to support troops and lay a foundation during that long war for his own army; which brought him honor later on. Besides this, to be able to undertake greater enterprises, continuing to make use of religion, he turned to a kind of holy cruelty by chasing out and clearing the Moors from his kingdom:<sup>3</sup> no accomplishment could have been more pathetic or unusual. He attacked, under the same cloak, Africa; he conducted the campaign in Italy; he finally attacked France; and in this way he continuously carried out and contrived great things that always kept the minds of his subjects uncertain and amazed and occupied with the outcome of events. And one action of his would spring from another, so that between one and the other he would never allow enough time for men to work calmly against him.



It is also most helpful for a prince to furnish unusual evidence of his abilities in regard to internal politics, such as we hear told about Messer Bernabò of Milan;<sup>4</sup> when the occasion arises that an individual in civil life performs some extraordinary deed, whether good or bad, he should choose a way of rewarding him or punishing him that will stimulate much discussion. And above all, a prince should strive in all his actions to give the impression of the great man of outstanding intelligence.

A prince is also esteemed when he is a true friend or a true enemy; that is when, without any reservation, he declares himself in favor of one against another. Such a policy will always be more useful than remaining neutral; because if two powerful neighbors of yours come to blows, they will be of the sort that, when one of them has won, you will either have reason to fear the victor, or you will not. In either of these two instances, it will always be more useful for you to declare yourself and fight an open war; for, in the first instance, if you do not declare yourself, you will always be the prey of the winner, to the delight and satisfaction of the one who has been defeated, and you have no excuse, nothing to defend you, nor anyone to offer you refuge; because, whoever wins does not want dubious friends that would not help him in adverse times, and whoever loses will not take you in, since you were not willing to run the risk of coming to his defense.

At the request of the Aetolians, Antiochus moved into Greece to chase out the Romans. Antiochus sent envoys to the Achaeans, who were friendly toward the Romans, to encourage them to remain neutral; and on the other hand the Romans were encouraging them to take up arms on their behalf. This matter came up for consideration in the council of the Achaeans, where the legate of Anti-

E' non mi è incognito come molti hanno avuto e hanno opinione che le cose del mondo sieno in modo governate dalla fortuna e da Dio, che li uomini con la prudenzia loro non possino correggerle, anzi non vi abbino remedio alcuno; e per questo potrebbano iudicare che non fussi da insudare molto nelle cose, ma lasciarsi governare alla sorte. Questa opinione è suta più creduta ne' nostri tempi, per la variazione grande delle cose che si sono viste e veggonsi ogni dì, fuora di ogni umana coniettura. A che pensando io qualche volta, mi sono in qualche parte inclinato nella opinione loro. Nondimanco, perchè il nostro libero arbitrio non sia spento, iudico potere essere vero che la fortuna sia arbitra della metà delle azioni nostre, ma che etiam lei ne lasci governare l' altra metà, o preso, a noi. E assomiglio quella a uno di questi fiumi rovinosi, che, quando s' adirano, allagano e piani, ruinano gli alberi e gli edifizii, lievano da questa parte terreno, pongono da quell' altra; ciascuno fugge loro dinanzi, ognuno cede allo impeto loro, senza potervi in alcuna parte obstar. E benchè sieno così fatti, non resta però che li uomini, quando sono tempi quieti, non vi potessino fare provvedimenti e con ripari e argini, in modo che, crescendo poi, o egli andrebbero per uno canale, o l' impeto loro non sarebbe nè sì licenzioso nè sì dannoso. Similmente interviene della fortuna; la quale dimostra la sua potenza dove non è ordinata virtù a resisterle; e quivi volta e sua impeti dove la sa che non sono fatti li argini e li ripari a tenerla. E se voi considerrete la Italia, che è la sedia di queste variazioni e quella che ha dato loro il moto, vedrete essere una campagna senza argini e senza alcuno riparo: chè, s' ella fussi riparata da conveniente virtù, come la Magna, la Spagna e la Francia, o questa piena non arebbe fatte le variazioni grande che ha, o la non ci

I am not unaware that many have been and still are of the opinion that worldly affairs are in a way governed by fortune and by God, that men with their wisdom are not able to control them, indeed, that men can do nothing about them; and for this reason they would conclude that there is no point in sweating much over these things, instead let them be governed by chance. This opinion has been held more in our own day, because of the great changes in things that have been observed and are being observed every day that are beyond human imagination. When I think about this sometimes, I am to some extent inclined toward their opinion. Nevertheless, so that our free choice may not be obliterated, I hold that it could be true that fortune is the arbiter of half our actions, but that she still leaves the other half, or close to it, to be governed by us. And she resembles one of those violent rivers that, when they become enraged, flood the plains, tear down trees and buildings, lift up the earth from one side and deposit it on the other; everyone flees before them, everybody yields to their impact, unable to oppose them in any way. And although they are this way, it does not mean therefore that men, when times are quiet, cannot take precautions with floodgates and embankments, so that, when they swell up again, either they would move along through a canal, or their rush would not be so unchecked or so harmful. The same happens with fortune, who displays her force where there is no prepared resource to resist her; and she directs her impact there where she knows that floodgates and banks have not been constructed to contain her. And if you consider Italy, which is the seat of these changes and the one that put them into motion, you will see that she is a country without embankments and without any floodgates: for if

In accord  
 she had been protected with suitable resources,<sup>1</sup> like Germany, Spain and France, either this flood would not have caused the great changes it has, or it would not have come about at all. And let what I have just said suffice as a general discussion on opposing fortune.

But confining myself more to particulars, let me say that we may see a prince prosper today, and tomorrow come to ruin, without having seen a change in his character or in anything else. This I believe stems, first, from the causes discussed at length earlier; that is, that a prince who relies entirely on fortune will come to ruin as soon as she changes. I believe, furthermore, that he will prosper who adapts his course of action to conditions of the present time, and similarly that he will not prosper who with his course of action conflicts with the times. For men can be seen, in the things which lead them to the goal that each has before him, namely, glory and wealth, to proceed in different ways: one with cautiousness, another with impetuosity; one by violence, another with strategy; one by patience, another by way of its contrary; and each one by these diverse methods can arrive at his goal. Moreover, in the case of two cautious men, we can see one carry out his plan, the other not; and likewise two men prospering equally well by means of two different methods, one being cautious and the other impetuous: which stems from nothing else if not from the conditions of the times that do or do not conform to their course of action. From this arises what I have said, that two men, working in different ways, can produce the same effect; and two men working in the same way, one achieves his goal, and the other does not. From this depends also the mutability of what is good; for, if a man governs himself with caution and patience, and the times and circumstances are in accord so that his course of procedure is good, he will go along prospering; but, if times

and circumstances change, he is ruined, because he does not change his course of action. Nor does one find a man wise enough to know how to adapt himself to this; not only because he cannot deviate from that to which he is naturally inclined, but also because, having always prospered while following along one path, he cannot be persuaded to leave it. And therefore the cautious man, when it is time for him to act with impetuosity, does not know how; and so he is ruined; for, if he were to change his nature with the times and the circumstances, his fortune would not change.

Pope Julius II in all his dealings acted impetuously; and he found the times and the circumstances very much in accord with his course of action, which always produced favorable results. Consider the first battle he waged, against Bologna, while Messer Giovanni Bentivogli was still alive. The Venetians were not happy about it, and neither was the king of Spain; he was negotiating with France over the enterprise; and nonetheless, with his fierceness and impetuosity, he personally put that campaign into motion. Such a motion kept Spain and the Venetians in check and in place, the latter out of fear, and the other by the desire to regain all the kingdom of Naples; at the same time he drew the king of France into it, because the king, having seen him make this move, and desiring to make him a friend in order to defeat the Venetians, decided he could not deny him his troops without obviously offending him. And so Julius accomplished, with his impetuous move, what no other pontiff, possessing all human wisdom, could accomplish; for, if he had waited to leave Rome until the agreements were established and everything was settled, as any other pontiff would have done, he would never have succeeded; because the king of France would have found a thousand excuses, and the others would have instilled in him a

thousand fears. I want to leave aside his other deeds, for all of them were similar, and all of them turned out well. And the brevity of life did not allow him to experience the opposite; because, if such times had come that might have required him to act with caution, his ruin would have followed from it: for never would he have deviated from those methods to which nature inclined him.

I conclude, then, that fortune varying, and men remaining fixed in their ways, while the two are in accordance with each other men are prosperous, and when they are in discord, unprosperous. I am certainly convinced of this: that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman, and it is necessary, if one wishes to hold her down, to beat her and fight with her. And we see that she allows herself to be taken over more by these men than by those who make cold advances; and then, being a woman, she is always the young man's friend, because they are less cautious, more reckless and with greater audacity command her.

## NOTES

1. That is, military forces.

LINGUA BOOKS

*Montaigne's*

ESSAYS and  
SELECTED WRITINGS

*Translated & Edited by  
Donald M. Frame*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*Voltaire's*

CANDIDE

*Translated & Edited by  
Peter Gay*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

*St Martin's Press, New York*