

1434-1494 Medici family controls Florentine Republic:

quasi-hereditary rule through manipulation of electoral system;

**COSIMO DE MEDICI: 1434-1464** head of anti-war faction, wealthiest merchant banker

1433 communal elections favor Medici; Albizzi fear Medici takeover

Cosimo arrested; banished to Venice by political enemies, Albizzi & Strozzi

1434 Cosimo recalled: asserts control through manipulation of electoral system;

**scrutino a mano** (by hand) by **accoppiatori** = 10 electors pro-Medici

exile of enemies of 1433: Albizzi & Strozzi

Cosimo's office holding: **gonfaloniere** of justice for 3 terms (total of 6 months in 30 years);

rules from behind the scenes through Medici supporters in office

major role = control of foreign affairs & city finances

**Foreign Policy under Cosimo:** anti-republican alliance with Milan

**1440: Milanese Duke Filippo Maria Visconti** allies with exiled Albizzi,

**Battle of Anghiari:** Milan defeated, end of Albizzi threat

**Milanese succession crisis:** 1441 Bianca Visconti (illegitimate daughter)

marries Francesco Sforza, lowborn **condottiere** for Milan

**1447 death of Duke Filippo Maria Visconti** during war with Venice

**1447-1450 Ambrosian Republic** (surviving republican sentiments in Milan)

Cosimo supports Sforza against Venice and against Milanese republic

reversal of traditional republican alliance system with Venice against Milan:

Outbreak of general Italian warfare: Milan + Florence versus Venice + Naples

Venice allies with Naples' King Alfonso; 1453 fall of Constantinople leads to

**1454 Peace of Lodi** ratified by all Italian states; ends territorial expansion

**Balance of power** established between surviving major Italian powers:

Milan (Lombardy), Venice, Florence, Papal States, Naples:

**1454-1494** Period of (relatively) stable inter-state relations

development of diplomatic procedures (e.g. resident ambassadors)

**Government of Piero de Medici (1464-1469) "Il Gottoso" (gout-ridden)**

Republican opposition headed by Niccolo Soderini and Luca Pitti

1465 Soderini leads campaign to restore secret elections

serves two months as **gonfaloniere**; speeches in favor of "liberty"

1466 death of Francesco Sforza weakens Cosimo's Florence-Milan alliance

balance of power restored by Naples Milan/ support for Medici Florence  
emergency commission (**balia**) exiles Niccolo Soderini (but note Niccolo's  
brother, Tommaso Soderini, remains as leader of the Medici faction)

Pitti Palace eventually comes into Medici hands

**For republican opposition under Piero, see Letters of Alessandra Strozzi,**

wife & mother of exiled Strozzi men remains behind in Florence;

correspondence with her sons who are bankers in Naples & Spain;

her son-in-law, Marco Parenti: merchant, marries into Strozzi family after 1434 exile

**Chronology of Medici rulers:** Cosimo de Medici (1434-1464) il Vecchio

Piero de Medici (1464-1469) -- midterm goes through Piero di Cosimo

Lorenzo the Magnificent (1469-1492) grandson of Cosimo

Piero de Medici (1492-94) overthrown & expelled by Republic of 1494

1512: Medici re-instated as rulers of Florence, suppression of Republic of 1494

**RENAISSANCE HUMANISM** Revival of classical literature and learning:

defined as literary, cultural, and educational movement based on recovery of classical Latin, then Greek texts (14-15th C.): e.g.

context: rise of interest in classical Latin literature among literate laymen, notaries (*ars dictaminis* = letter writing), lawyers = first intellectual movement dominated by laymen, rather than clerics

**new curriculum:** use classical texts for study of human life, morality

***studia humanitatis:*** study of things human (i.e. not divine, not natural) grammar (Latin), rhetoric, poetry, history, moral philosophy

compare medieval scholastic curriculum of seven liberal arts:

*trivium:* grammar, rhetoric, logic (& dialectics)

*quadrivium:* arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music = (natural philosophy)

**What did Renaissance Humanists learn from their classical studies?**

classical Latin literature as moralizing, practical, this-worldly virtues

aim to teach good conduct, responsibilities in social relationships

eg: Cicero *De Officiis* (*On Duty*); Seneca *Epistles*: Stoic moral philosopher

context for pursuit and definition of virtue is human life in this world, not Christian context of eternal salvation or damnation (as for Dante)

**Purpose of knowledge:**

scholasticism: 1) pursuit of abstract, rational intellectual truth about God, creation (mankind as part of creation), Redemption

2) encyclopedic approach to knowledge *sub specie eternitatis* truth is ahistorical, beyond time (under the eye of eternity)

humanism: 1) moralizing, practical approach to knowledge as useful to men, to improve human nature, inculcate human virtues  
Petrarch: "It is better to will the good than know the truth."

2) historical approach to knowledge of the classics in their own historical context  
eg: Petrarch sees Cicero in context of late Roman Republican politics

**Humanist careers** as civil servants in Republican context: humanist learning in service of state

**Coluccio Salutati:** 1) lawyer, Florentine Chancellor (1375-1406)

skills: formal Latin correspondence, oratorical ability (rhetoric), panegyrics (speech in praise of city, ruler etc.), history

2) role as humanist educator: defends curriculum of *studia humanitatis* against Dominican clerics attack on study of classics as 'pagan' texts

3) role in war of Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan (1397-1402) against Florence

**Leonardo Bruni** (Chancellor) rhetorical defense of republic (Baron thesis)

*In Praise of the City of Florence* 1400: republican liberty versus Milanese tyranny

*History of the City of Florence*: humanist imitation of Roman history

**Recovery of Greek Learning:** 1453 = fall of Constantinople to Turks

**Marsilio Ficino** (1433-1499) humanists under patronage of Cosimo di Medici established in Villa Careggi outside Florence, called "Platonic Academy"

1462: Ficino begins translation of Plato's *Dialogues*: crucial moment Greek revival

**Giovanni Pico della Mirandola** (1463-1494) *Oration on the Dignity of Man*

high estimate of potential of human nature (unlike traditionally Christian view)

recovery of all ancient texts as basis for synthesis of all knowledge

**For republican opposition under Cosimo, see Mark Phillips, Memoir of Marco Parenti**

Marco Parenti = a merchant who marries into family after exile of male Strozzi by Cosimo in 1434; Marco later wrote a political memoir. Phillips' other major sources are the Letters of Alessandra Strozzi, wife & mother of exiled Strozzi men, remains behind in Florence; corresponds with sons who are bankers in Naples & Spain. Excellent source for role of women "behind the scenes" of politics. Her major goal is getting her family back to Florence (re-admitted in 1462 after 28 years). Letters document her matchmaking as she tries to find local wives for exiled sons.

**PIERO DE MEDICI (1464-1469) "Il Gottoso" (gout-ridden)**

Republican opposition headed by Niccolo Soderini and Luca Pitti

1465 Soderini leads campaign to restore secret elections

serves two months as gonfaloniere; speeches in favor of "liberty"

1466 death of Francesco Sforza weakens Cosimo's Florence-Milan alliance

Republicans encourage Venice & Ferrara to attack Florence

balance of power restored by Naples Milan/ support for Medici Florence

emergency commission (balia) exiles Niccolo Soderini (but note Niccolo's

brother, Tommaso Soderini, remains as part of the Medici faction)

**LORENZO DE MEDICI (1469-1492) "Il Magnifico"**

1469 marries Clarice Orsini, old noble Roman family, sign of princely status

joint heir with brother Giuliano, but Lorenzo assumes leadership

after "petition" by Tommaso Soderini; receives title of "Magnifico"

1471-1484 POPE SIXTUS IV (Della Rovere) resumes papal conquest of central Italy

1474-80 war to limit Papal expansion: Venice, Milan, Florence vs Papacy & Naples

1476 Milan: assassination of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza,

assassins: republican humanist motives; classical treatises on tyrannicide

power seized by Ludovico il Moro (brother in law of Duke's widow)

1478 PAZZI CONSPIRACY: direct inspiration from assassination of Sforza Duke Milan

Pazzi = old Florentine noble family, banned from politics in 1292;

readmitted to Florence by Cosimo with marriage alliance, but

Pazzi have rival bank with headquarters in Rome, resent Medici

plot to kill Lorenzo & Giuliano, seize government for Pazzi family

mercenary captain (condottiere) Gian Battista Montesecco hired but backed out **Papal**

role: Sixtus IV 1476: 1) transfers papal accounts from Medici to Pazzi Bank,

2) appoints Francesco Salviati (Medici enemy) Archbishop of Pisa

3) approves overthrow of Medici, but not their assassination

4) publicly denounces Medici "tyranny" as abomination to God

April 26: assassination of Giuliano (killed) and Lorenzo (survived) set for

Sunday Mass in Florentine Cathedral (Duomo) Santa Maria del Fiore;

AB Salviati plays role in revolt, occupies palace for Pazzi

Pazzi on republican support; Pazzi attempt to use republican slogan

"Popolo et liberta"; crowd replies "Palle, Palle" (Medici symbol)

Florence remains loyal to Medici, revolt fails

execution of Francesco Pazzi and Archbishop Salviati angers Pope

1478-80 war resumed: Florence, Venice, Milan vs Naples & Papacy

1479 Ludovico's seizure of power in Milan strengthens Florence

Lorenzo travels to Naples to negotiate with King Ferrante

1480 Turkish invasion of Otranto distracts Pope who withdraws from war;

Lorenzo returns as "savior of Florence" because of truce

## RENAISSANCE PAPACY DURING 15TH AND EARLY 16TH C.

**POPE: MARTIN V COLONNA** Roman noble 1420 enters Rome as first Pope after Schism  
Florentine connection: Cosimo di Medici as papal banker

**EUGENIUS IV 1434** Roman uprising led by Colonna; takes refuge in Florence under Cosimo;  
appoints **Cardinal Giovanni Vitelleschi as Governor of Papal States:**  
ruthless condottiere, suppresses Roman nobility in Latium (Lazio)  
presides over **Council of Ferrara/Florence 1438-9**; Eastern (Greek)  
Emperor John Palaeologus & Orthodox Patriarch seek aid against Turks

**NICHOLAS V 1447-55** first Pope after Schism to hold power unopposed;  
**refortification of Castel Sant'Angelo:** strengthens fort's defenses  
building extended bastions, towers; also papal apartment on top  
**1st humanist Pope:** studied Greek in Florence; manuscript collector;  
Cosimo consults with him on organization of library of San Marco  
**begins Vatican Library:** hires scribes to copy all known Latin and  
Greek book manuscripts, available to humanist scholars  
**building program for city of Rome** inspired by Flavio Biondi

**Florentine Humanists in Rome: Leonardo Bruni Aretino: Papal secretary 1406-1427**

**Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459)** studies Latin as part of Salutati's circle  
1403 papal secretary; goes to Constance for council, manuscripts  
1430-40 writes De varietate fortunae (On the vagaries of fortune)

**Maxim: "Quanto fuit Roma ruina ipsa docet."**

**("The ruins themselves show how great Rome was.")**

Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire 1780's:  
last chapter: Poggio & Eugenius IV on ruins of Capitoline

1452 back to Florence as Chancellor (same office as Salutati, Bruni)  
**Flavio Biondi:** employed as humanist scholar at papal court 1433-1463

**1444-46 Roma Instaurata (Rome Restored)** dedicated to Eugenius IV  
**urges Pope to rebuild city of Rome;** ancient literary texts  
used to reconstruct ancient Roman archeology & topography

**CALLIXTUS III (1455-1459)** first Borgia Pope (Valencia, Spain)  
makes two nephews Cardinals including Rodrigo Borgia (Alexander VI)

**PIUS II (1458-1464) Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini** (Siena, Pienza)  
humanist and conciliarist at Council of Basel

Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope (account of his own election, trading votes in the "privy")  
1460 Execrabilis: condemns conciliar theory as heretical: "Forget Aeneas, follow Pius."  
effort to launch a Crusade (dies in Ancona 1464)

Pinturricchio paintings in Siena Duomo Piccolomini Library

**SIXTUS IV (1471-1480)** Francesco della Rovere (uncle of Julius II, elected 1503)  
builds Sistine Chapel in Vatican Palace; nepotism (promotes relatives)  
1478 role in Pazzi Conspiracy against Lorenzo and Giuliano dei Medici

**Vatican fresco 1477** (transferred to canvas): nepotism = appointing nephews to office

**Melozzo da Forlì, Sixtus IV installing Platina as Vatican librarian with four nephews:**  
from left: Giovanni della Rovere, made Signore of Senigallia (in red)

married to daughter of Federico di Montefeltro Duke of Urbino  
Girolamo Riario, made Count of Imola and Forlì, assassinated 1488 (married to Catherina Sforza)  
Giuliano della Rovere Cardinal di San Pietro in Vincula (later Pope Julius II)  
Raffaele Riario, Cardinal of San Giorgio and favorite of Sixtus IV

## 15<sup>th</sup> C. Florence: Philosophical or Neo-Platonic Humanism

# 12

**I. Renaissance humanism: 14-15th C. Italy** (see earlier handout on Petrarch & Civic Humanists)  
cultural & educational movement which develops outside medieval universities  
recovery of ancient Greek and Latin texts  
new curriculum: grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, moral philosophy

Dates: 1450's invention of the printing press  
1453 fall of Constantinople to Ottoman Turks  
1460 translation of Plato by Marsilio Ficino from Greek to Latin  
commissioned by Cosimo de Medici of Florence (d. 1464)

### II. Learned Magical Traditions

**Medieval:** Key of Solomon: handwritten medieval magical texts for conjuring spirits

**Renaissance:** manuscript recovery of The Hermetic Corpus (body of writings):

**Greek texts attributed to Hermes Trismegistus** ("thrice great")  
thought to be ancient Egyptian priest, contemporary of Moses  
prisca theologia (early theology) separate revelation to the Gentiles at time of Moses

**Hermetic Books:** Asclepius—on magical Egyptian religion  
Pimander—on creation of world

1614: Isaac Casaubon correctly dates Hermetic writings to 2-3rd C. AD Greece (i.e. not Egyptian)

**III. Renaissance Neo-Platonism** – Plato: ideas in mind of God as ultimate reality  
Allegory of the cave: physical reality as a pale reflection of those ideas

**Marsilio Ficino:** humanist scholar, priest and physician  
translates Plato & hermetic corpus under patronage of Cosimo de' Medici  
Cosimo lets Ficino use Villa Careggi as retreat for study = Platonic Academy of Florence

1489 Libri Di Vita (Books of Life)  
hermetic theory of natural, astrological magic  
talismans: as objects reflecting astral influence

Botticelli – Painter under Lorenzo who adapts Ficino's theories in paintings such as  
The Birth of Venus and Primavera

### Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

student of Ficino, heavily influenced by hermetic and platonic writings  
multiple languages: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Chaldaic, Syriac & others

1480's Oration on the Dignity of Man as prelude to his 900 Theses on all knowledge  
Themes: "The Great Chain of Being" (see illustration of one version on reverse side)  
mutability of human nature, able to rise to high levels or sink to low ones

1487 Theses condemned by Rome as heretical due to **syncretism** = blending of traditions  
1490's repents due to Savonarola's preaching

### Further reading:

Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition  
Ingrid Rowland, Giordano Bruno 2008

ACE DIA.										EST.
GV: LA.										EST.
LXXV RIA.										EST.
VIR TVS.										EST.
RATIO NALE.										EST.
SENSI BILE.										EST.
VEGE TAVLE.										EST.
MINE RALE.										EST.

6. A humanist view of the world: Bouelles- 16<sup>th</sup> Century  
French humanist

Decameron reading Xerox packet: Nastagio degli Onesti V, 8 and Griselda X, 10

**Background:**

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) was from a prosperous merchant family in Florence and author of the first Life of Dante. He lived through the Bubonic Plague (1347-48), caused by infected rats brought on ships from the eastern Mediterranean. The "Black Death" killed its victims hideously, quickly and in great numbers; in crowded cities, the death rate for this initial outbreak was between 50% and 75%. The Decameron's opening provides the most famous description of the plague's impact on Florence, and provides the setting for ten days of stories told by a group of young men and women who leave for a country villa to escape the devastation of the city.

Boccaccio's attitude to women is a subject on which scholars disagree, some stressing the clear misogyny of many of his stories, others emphasizing the sexually liberating message of others.

**Introduction to Day One (on the Plague)**

What is the effect of the Black Plague on Florentine society and on traditional family and social bonds? What are some of the ways that people in the city respond to the threat of death? (pp. 52-56)

**Selected stories** Look for the 1) image of women presented,  
2) relationships between women, their lovers, husbands, fathers, and  
3) social status of the characters involved.

**Nastagio degli Onesti, Day V, 8th story**

What are the barriers to Nastagio's love for the Traversari daughter?

Can you detect any literary source for the scene Nastagio witnesses in the woods?

How is the daughter presented, & why does she finally consent to marry?

**Griselda, Day X, 10th story** Why might this story be chosen as the last one?

Why is Gualtieri, the Marquis of Saluzzo, hesitant to get married, and what causes him to pick Griselda as his wife?

What are the terms of the pre-nuptial agreement he requires of her?  
How do his social equals react to the marriage?

What is the role of clothing in the story of Griselda?

What are Griselda's virtues? Is she a door mat or a heroine?

Note on the reception of "Griselda" - it was highly praised and quickly translated into Latin by Petrarch himself. What might explain this very positive reception?

## ALBERTI ON THE FAMILY, BOOK III STUDY GUIDE

Leon Battista Alberti, The Family in Renaissance Florence: Book III (1434) translated by Renee Neu Watkins, pp. 1-20 (Introduction), 25-47, 50-51, 56-67, 74-99 (on instructing a wife), 108-115. [83 pages total]  
Two copies are on 24 hr reserve at OUGL or ask at UBS textbook desk.

Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) is best known for his works on painting and architecture, but also wrote the most famous treatise on the family in Renaissance Italy (1434). His wide range of knowledge makes him the kind of person sometimes described as a "Renaissance man."

The Renaissance was a cultural movement based on the revival of Latin and Greek literature and art. 15th century Florence became the first place in western Europe where Greek was taught since antiquity; Alberti clearly draws on Greek literature, especially Xenophon, in this treatise.

Like Dante and the Strozzi, the Alberti were a wealthy Florentines exiled as a result of political conflicts. Ironically, our expert on the family was himself illegitimate and a cleric who never married. His view of "the way a family should be" derives from his own negative experience of rejection, hostility and denial of financial assistance by his relatives.

Book III opens with the death in 1421 of Lorenzo, Alberti's father, and the beginning of his own personal difficulties. (See introduction.)

### Study questions:

The treatise is in the form of a dialogue among several members of the Alberti family. What is the source of the dialogue format? Who are the individual speakers, and what effect is created by using dialogue?

What attitude towards money is expressed by Giannozzo (pp. 26-34)?  
Notes themes of generosity, avarice, thrift, honor.  
How do these attitudes compare with those in Chretien de Troyes?

What do we learn about the social status of the Alberti family? (pp. 38-39)

How has exile affected their position in the world and attitude towards politics (especially the honor of office holding)? (pp. 43-47, 50-51)

What steps should head of household take to ensure supplies for the family? (pp. 56-60) What are the benefits of urban versus rural life? (pp. 59-64)  
Note attitude to peasants (p. 59) and section on clothing (pp. 64-65)

What kind of animal analogies does the speaker use to sum up the role of the head of household (pp. 75-76)?

How does Lionardo sum up the position of classical writers on roles of men and women? (pp. 77-78) Do you recognize any of his sources here?

How does a new husband go about instructing his wife? (pp. 78-99) Should a husband keep secrets from his wife? (p. 79) Notes wife's role towards servants (pp. 88-90), friends and enemies of the family (pp. 98-99)

# MEDIEVAL POLITICAL THOUGHT & MACHIAVELLI

**Christian view of the state as fallen** Augustine, City of God: Rome as "city of man"

Medieval: descending theory of monarchical power  
God as ultimate source of ruler's authority

Dante, On Monarchy: on imperial authority

Scholasticism: 1260 recovery of Aristotle's Politics  
idea of state as natural, not fallen

Thomas Aquinas: state exists before fall

**Genre of advice to Princes:** speculum principis: = "mirror for princes"  
prince must have Christian virtues; humanists versions of this genre

**Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)** Florentine, father is lawyer  
educated, not from upper ranks, works as bureaucrat for republic 1498 - 1512

1512 Restoration of Medici: imprisoned, tortured, exiled  
begins to write, hoping for employment by Medici

1513 Discourses on Livy: on republican government

1520 Art of War centrality of military force to history

1520-25 History of Florence = humanist historian

## Sources of Machiavelli's thought:

Humanist: draws on Roman history, especially Livy on Roman Republic

Political experience as Chancellor for Florentine Republic

lives through the invasions of Italy by French: 1494, 1499, 1512-15

**New approaches:** Centrality of force and violence; utility of knowledge  
Realism("the way things are"), based on political experience of invasions

Ends and means: stability of the state is the measure of political success

Politics as autonomous sphere, not judged by other criteria

Utility of knowledge, which must have application, purpose in real world

Beginnings of "science of politics": formulates rules to predict behavior

Rules of "political necessity": "the way things are"

Variables: fortune vs virtù (ability, manliness)

The Prince written 1512-1513, circulated in manuscript

**Genre:** medieval predecessors: advice for the Christian Prince

speculum principis (mirror for princes): how a prince should act

Central themes: virtù (courage, manliness, ability),

fortune, necessity, realism, force, violence

## Organization of the treatise

**Pt I. Rules of Politics** Ch. 1-11 Kinds of states; Ch. 12-13 Troops

What are the different kinds of kingdoms?

What examples of rulers does Machiavelli use? (French, Turks)

Why are arms so important? What kind of military force is best?

**Pt II The Prince** Ch. 14-24

What should the Prince be like? How should he act?

Case studies: look at some of the examples Machiavelli presents  
and the conclusions he draw from them.

**Pt III Fortune:**

Ch 25 Fortune: metaphors of river & woman

Ch 26 Exhortation to Free Italy from the Barbarians

## **DWARFING OF ITALY, 1494-1530** political context for Machiavelli

### **FRENCH INVASIONS OF ITALY: Valois dynasty**

successive Kings launch inaugural invasions

**1494 Charles VIII of France:** first invasion of Italy  
called in by Ludovico il Moro (Sforza)

Duke of Milan, claims to Naples  
precipitates Medici exile from Florence

Charles "took Italy with chalk" (Machiavelli)

**1499 Louis XII** (see Machiavelli's Prince, Ch.3)  
called in by Venice against Milan

**1515 Francis I**

victory at Marignano, occupation of Milan  
later defeated at Pavia 1525 by Charles V

### **FLORENTINE REPUBLIC OF 1494 (1494-1512)**

Context French invasion of 1494: Valois King Charles VIII called in by  
Ludovico il Moro (Sforza) Duke of Milan, claims Naples

**Girolamo Savonarola**, prior of Convent of San Marco, Dominican

invited to Florence by Lorenzo as Lenten preacher  
moral reformer; opposed to corruption and luxury;  
organizes youth confraternities, "bonfires of vanities"  
role as prophet: sermons on God's punishment of  
Florence for wealth, vices, especially sodomy

1494 French invasion as God's wrath against Medici  
political position:

Christian republican government: higher standards of civic virtue  
institutions on Venetian model:

lifetime executive (like Doge); Great Council, Council of Ten

1494-98 political power but no office;

followers called piagnoni (weepers)

fall of Savonarola: due to conflict with

**Borgia Pope Alexander VI:** his son

**Cesare Borgia** (Duke Valentino) : his son is head of papal army

**Lucrezia Borgia**, daughter of Pope,  
married from the Vatican to Este Duke of Ferrara

1497 excommunicated by Alexander VI

1498 interdict issued against Florence by Pope

Savonarola arrested, tortured, confesses to fraud  
executed by Republic, burned in central piazza

**Machiavelli (1469-1527)**

**Career under Republic: 1498 - 1512**

Second Chancellor & Secretary to Council of Ten (foreign policy)

Diplomatic experience: envoy to French King, Cesare Borgia,

Pope Julius II, Emperor Maximilian

Military experience: Florentine militias, opposed to mercenaries

**The Prince** written 1512-1513: actual title is Il Principe (as in Augustus' principate)  
 (≠ son of a King) source is Latin: *primus inter pares* (first among equals)

**Genre:** medieval predecessors: advice for the Christian Prince

speculum principis (mirror for princes): how a prince "should" act.

stress on "the way things should be" (not "the way things are")

What would be surprising for someone reading this book expecting a traditional treatise of advice to the Prince?

Why is Machiavelli's advice so different? What was his experience of politics before writing the treatise?

How does he use historical examples, from ancient Rome, Bible, Italy?

Machiavelli has been described as the first "political scientist."

What is his intellectual approach to the problems of political action?

Look at his case studies & the conclusions he draws.

What does a ruler need to know? How can he learn these things?

Who can help the ruler understand the "way things are"?

### Organization of the treatise

**Pt I. Rules of Politics** Ch. 1-11 Kinds of states; Ch. 12-13 Troops

What are the different kinds of kingdoms?

What examples of rulers does Machiavelli use? (French, Turks, others?)

Why are arms so important to Machiavelli? What kind of military force is best?

What is the central purpose of political (or military) actions?

**Pt II The Prince** Ch. 14-24

What should the Prince be like? How should he act?

Case studies: look at the examples Machiavelli presents and the conclusions he draw from them, especially from the careers of his favorites, such as Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia, but also earlier memorable types like Ezzolino da Romano

**Pt III Fortune:**

Ch 25 Fortune: metaphors of river & woman -- what's the difference here?

Ch 26 Exhortation to Free Italy from the Barbarians

### Discourses on Livy (selections from Adams volume, pp. 89-119):

Livy's History of Rome Ab Urbe Condita (from founding of city)= Republican Rome

Introduction: need to imitate the historic virtues of ancient Rome, not just her art

I.2 imperfection of Florentine constitution; types of states, cycle of governments (p. 92)

monarchy → tyranny; aristocracy → oligarchy; democracy → anarchy

I.6 comparison of republics:

Venice (aristocratic, closed), Sparta (small, closed) and Rome (populous, expansionist)

I.12 religion as key to state: Italy ruined by Church of Rome which keeps it divided (p. 100)

note (rhetorical) distinction between Christianity and "Church of Rome"

what kind of religion is good for the state? See Prince, Chapter XI Adams pp. 31-33

I.27 Julius II conquers Perugia 1505 because the tyrant Baglione failed to kill him when he could

### Superiority of Republics:

I.29 Prince vs people: the people are more grateful than princes (who act out of fear & avarice)

I. 59 People are wiser than princes (against general opinion which holds opposite p. 109)

III.9 Necessity to change with the times: virtù must adapt to fortuna

## 16TH C ITALIAN POLITICS

### I Renaissance Papacy during late 15th and early 16th C.

**Sixtus IV (1471-1480) Della Rovere** (uncle of Julius II, below)  
builds Sistine Chapel in Vatican Palace; nepotism (promotes relatives)

**Innocent VIII (1480-1492)** financial corruption, indulgence sales;  
first Pope to publicly recognize his (many) children while Pope

**Alexander VI Borgia (1492-1503)** Spaniard, effort to leave Papal to  
son **Cesare Borgia (Duke Valentino)** head of papal armies (Ch.7)  
= Machiavelli's hero: why Cesare?  
daughter **Lucrezia Borgia** married in ceremony in Vatican

**Julius II della Rovere (1503-1513)** "warrior Pope," personally directs  
Papal troops in battle, expands boundaries of Papal States  
Erasmus' pacifistic treatise: Julius Exclusus (from Heaven)

**Leo X Medici (1513-1521)** election demonstrates restored Medici power  
traditional alliance of Popes & Florence strengthened

**Hadrian VI (1522-23)** Dutch Pope; last non-Italian pope until 20th C.

**Clement VII Medici (1523-34)** prisoner during Sack of Rome (1527)  
by the German troops of Emperor Charles V Hapsburg

**Paul III (1534-1549)** Farnese, old Roman family, builds Palazzo Farnese  
finally calls Council of Trent (1543-63) (off Campo dei Fiori)

### II Dwarfing of Italy, 1494-1527: Hapsburg - Valois Wars

**French (Valois) invasions of Italy: 1494 Charles VIII:**

1498 **Louis XII (Prince Ch.3)** called in by Venice against Milan

1515 **Francis I** -victory at Marignano, occupation of Milan  
defeated at Pavia 1525 by Charles V

**1519 Imperial election: candidates**

Charles I of Spain (Hapsburg)

Francis I of France

Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony

### First H-V War 1522-1526      Second H-V War 1526-1529

1522-4 struggle for Milan between France & Empire

1525 **BATTLE OF PAVIA:** Imperial victory, Francis taken prisoner

1528 **TREATY OF MADRID:**

Francis renounces claims to Burgundy, Netherlands, Italy Francis marries  
Charles sister

1526 **LEAGUE OF COGNAC:** broad alliance against Charles V by  
France,, Papacy, Italians (Milan, Florence, Venice)

1527 **SACK OF ROME:** by German Imperial troops  
Pope Clement VII (Medici) prisoner in Castel Sant'Angelo

1529 **PEACE OF CAMBRAI:**

Francis renounces claims to Flanders & Italy

Charles renounces claim to Burgundy

1529 **PEACE OF BARCELONA**

Pope confirms Imperial (Hapsburg) claim to Naples

1530 **Charles crowned Holy Roman Emperor** by Pope Clement VII  
ceremony held in Bologna

HSTEU401

**DWARFING OF ITALY, 1494-1530** political context decline of Renaissance Italy

**FRENCH INVASIONS OF ITALY: Valois dynasty**

successive Kings launch inaugural invasions

**1494 Charles VIII of France:** first invasion of Italy

called in by Ludovico il Moro (Sforza) Duke of Milan, claims to Naples

result: Medici exile from Florence Charles "took Italy with chalk" (Machiavelli)

**1499 Louis XII** (see Machiavelli's Prince, Ch.3) called in by Venice against Milan

**1515 Francis I** victory at Marignano, occupation of Milan

later defeated at Pavia 1525 by Charles V

**HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE (HRE) \* see Hapsburg genealogy below \***

**1519 Imperial election:** candidates are

Francis I of France (Valois)

Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony (Luther's protector)

Charles I of Spain (Austrian Hapsburgs) elected to as Emperor Charles V

**HAPSBURG - VALOIS WARS** (Empire versus France in Italy)

1521 Leo X makes alliance with Empire against France (see below for 1526 reversal)

1522-4 struggle for Milan between France & Empire

**1525 BATTLE OF PAVIA:** Imperial victory for Charles V

Francis taken prisoner, agrees to

**1526 TREATY OF MADRID:**

Francis renounces claim to Burgundy, Netherlands, and Italy,

also marries Charles sister but once released, Francis joins

**1526 LEAGUE OF COGNAC:** broad alliance against Charles V by

France, Papacy, Italians (Milan, Florence, Venice) – for Papacy, this is a

reversal by Clement VII of Leo X's alliance with Empire; Charles is angry

**1526 Battle of Mohacs** in Hungary: troops of Charles V hold off Ottoman Turks

unpaid Imperial troops march on Italy and Rome (led by Charles Bourbon)

**1527 Florence** revolts against Medici, re-establishes the Republic until 1530

**1527 SACK OF ROME** under second Medici Pope Clement VII

by Imperial troops German (Lutherans) & Spanish

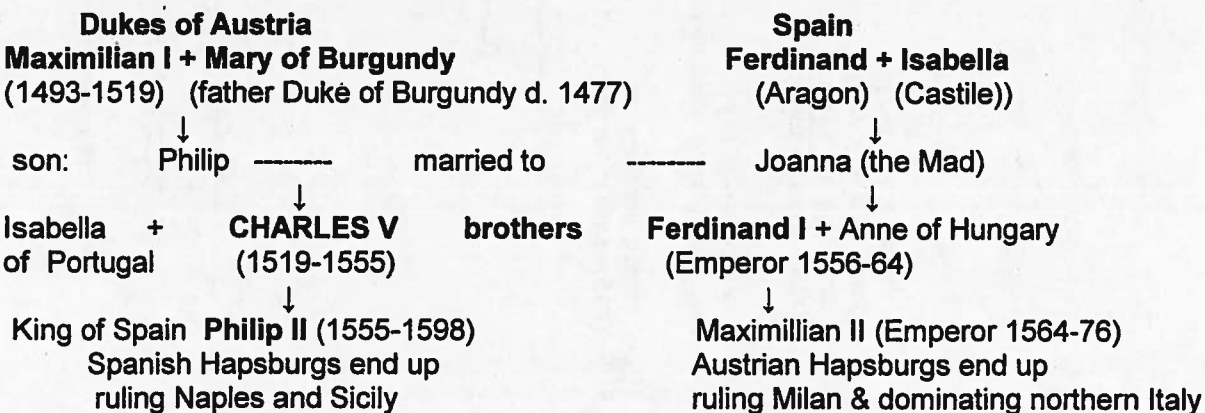
Clement VII prisoner in Castel Sant' Angelo from May to December

**1530 Charles V** crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Clement VII

ceremony in Bologna (part of Papal States) Medici restored to Florence

\*\*\*\*\*

**HAPSBURG GENEALOGY:**

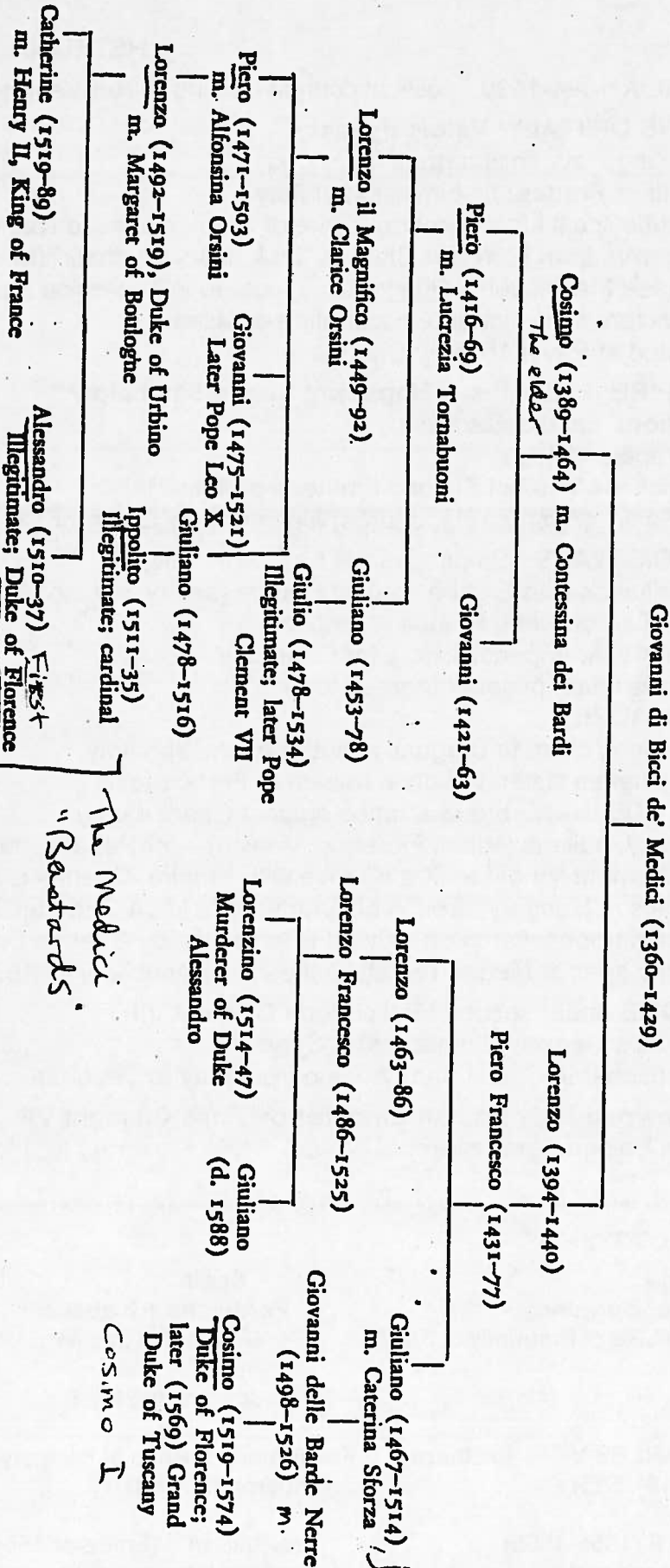


Rulers of Florence are underlined

THE HOUSE OF MEDICI

Vol. II

from: Selenyil, F.  
Medieval and  
Renaissance Florence



mother: black slave of Medici  
 father: illegitimate  
 sister: Giulio (Clement VII)  
 or - Lorenzo Duke of Urbino  
 (as on this chart)

Salviati  
 Medici

**LEONARDO DA VINCI (1451-1519) : MAJOR PHASES OF HIS CAREER**

# 17

Born illegitimate son of notary in Vinci, outside of Florence, province of Tuscany  
Education: basic math, reading and writing in Italian (but didn't learn Latin = "unlettered")

**Florentine period: to 1482**

Artistic training: 1469 - 76 (ages 17-24: usual age to start apprenticeship = 13)

Apprenticed to Verrocchio, painter & sculptor with workshop in Florence

Verrocchio painting, "Baptism of Christ": angels & landscape done by Leonardo

Lorenzo de' Medici (ruler of Florence 1469-1492): patron of arts, commissioned paintings of "The Annunciation," and "The Adoration of the Magi" (unfinished)

**Milan: 1482- 1499** (leaves due to French invasion of Milan in 1499)

In service of Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan (1452-1508)

See letter of self-recommendation (reverse side of handout): stress on engineering, weapons design, fortifications, architecture, hydraulics (water systems); as for sculpture and painting, "I can do any kind of work as well as any man."

Projects: Last Supper, fresco for refectory of church of Santa Maria delle Grazie

Virgin of the Rocks: landscape background, chiaroscuro (light & dark)

Portraits of members of Sforza court; engineering & water projects

Bronze horse of Francesco Sforza, father of Ludovico Sforza

plaster model finished by 1499, but used as target practice by French invaders; never cast in bronze: too large, beyond technical capabilities of the time

**Florence: 1501 - 1509** returns to Florence: plan to re-route Arno River (not feasible)

(Medici expelled in 1494, republican government established 1494-1512)

paints Battle of Anghiari for Republican govt. in Palazzo della Signoria

"duelling frescoes" with Michelangelo, who is painting opposite wall

military engineering for Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI

and head of his father's papal army in central Italy: maps, fortifications

**Milan 1509-1513: service of French conquerors of Duchy of Milan; Leonardo hired by**

Charles of Amboise, French governor, at request of French King Louis XII

Hydraulics projects: canal from Milan to Lake Como (system of locks)

Paintings: Mona Lisa (La Gioconda), Saint Anne, Bacchus

Euclid's Geometry translated for him into Italian by friend Luca Pacioli

Works on notebooks: studies in perspective, human body, optics, machines

**Rome 1513-1517 Papal court of Leo X, first Medici Pope (from Florence)**

Engineering work on port of Civitavecchia, reclamation of Pontine Marshes

Studies of classical mythology, sculpture, ruins in Rome; disappoints the Pope

by time on dissection of human bodies (basis for notebooks anatomical drawings)

**France 1517-1519:**

Called to court of new French King, Francis I at Amboise, Loire Valley

Architectural designs for royal hunting chateau at Chambord

Takes part in theatrical productions: dies in 1519 at Amboise

Manuscripts left to close friend & student Francesco Melzi

**Bibliography:** The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci, 2 vols with illustrations (Dover Press)

Claire Farago (editor), Leonardo Da Vinci Codex Leicester: A Masterpiece of Science

Facsimile edition of the Leicester Codex, now owned by Bill Gates (1996)

Kenneth Clark, Leonardo Da Vinci, revised edition 1988

Serge Bramley, Leonardo: The Artist and the Man (1992)

A. Richard Turner, Inventing Leonardo (1994)

From:

SERGE BRAMLY

LEONARDO

THE ARTIST AND THE MAN

pp. 174-176

TRANSLATED BY SIAN REYNOLDS

(1988)

Leonardo's letter of self-recommendation  
to the Duke of Milan, Ludovico Sforza

This astonishing letter, consisting of eleven or twelve points (the order altered by renumbering) reveals a Leonardo one would never have suspected from our knowledge of his early years. It deserves to be quoted in full. (Approximately 1481).

Most Illustrious Lord, having by now sufficiently considered the experience of those men who claim to be skilled inventors of machines of war, and having realized that the said machines in no way differ from those commonly employed, I shall endeavor, without prejudice to anyone else, to reveal my secrets to Your Excellency, for whom I offer to execute, at your convenience, all the items briefly noted below.

1. I have a model of very strong but light bridges, extremely easy to carry, by means of which you will be able to pursue or if necessary flee an enemy; I have others, which are sturdy and will resist fire as well as attack, and are easy to lay down and take up. I also know ways to burn and destroy those of the enemy.

2. During a siege, I know how to dry up the water of the moats and how to construct an infinite number of bridges, covered ways, scaling ladders, and other machines for this type of enterprise.

3. *Item.* If because of the height of the embankment, and the strength of the place or its site, it should be impossible to reduce it by bombardment, I know methods of destroying any citadel or fortress, even if it is built on rock.

4. I also have models of mortars that are very practical and easy to transport, with which I can project stones so that they seem to be raining down; and their smoke will plunge the enemy into terror, to his great hurt and confusion.

9. And if battle is to be joined at sea, I have many very efficient machines for both attack and defense; and vessels that will resist even the heaviest cannon fire, fumes, and gunpowder.

5. *Item.* I know how to use paths and secret underground tunnels, dug without noise and following tortuous routes, to reach a given place, even if it means passing below a moat or a river.

6. *Item.* I will make covered vehicles, safe and unassailable, which will penetrate enemy ranks with their artillery and destroy the most powerful troops; the infantry may follow them without meeting obstacles or suffering damage.

7. *Item.* In case of need, I will make large bombards, mortars, and fire-throwing engines, of beautiful and practical design, which will be different from those presently in use.

8. Where bombardment would fail, I can make catapults, mangonels, *trabocchi*,<sup>12</sup> or other unusual machines of marvelous efficiency, not in common use. In short, whatever the situation, I can invent an infinite variety of machines for both attack and defense.

10. In peacetime, I think I can give perfect satisfaction and be the equal of any man in architecture, in the design of buildings public and private, or to conduct water from one place to another.

*Item.* I can carry out sculpture in marble, bronze, and clay; and in painting can do any kind of work as well as any man, whoever he be.

Moreover, the bronze horse could be made that will be to the immortal glory and eternal honor of the lord your father of blessed memory and of the illustrious house of Sforza.

And if any of the items mentioned above appears to anyone impossible or impractical, I am ready to give a demonstration in your park or in any other place that should please Your Excellency—to whom I recommend myself in all humility, etc.<sup>13</sup>

**DUCHY OF MANTUA:** low lying area in Po Valley, border between Milan & Venice, ruled by Gonzaga family from 1328; had been elected Capitano (military leader) protected by Imperial alliance and titles: 1433 Marquis; 1530 made Dukes 1627 dynasty dies out, 1629 city taken by Imperial German Hapsburg troops

Francesco I, Signore 1388-1407 resisted expansion of Milan under GG Visconti allied with Venice, for whom he conquered Verona and Padua in 1405 built **Castello San Giorgio**; begins manuscript collection for library

Gianfrancesco I 1407-1444: established school at court for Gonzaga children 1432 invites **Vittorino da Feltre** (humanist educated by **Guarino da Verona\***, to teach patrician, selected poorer boys; used Gonzaga villa La Giocosa

\* **Guarino da Verona:** important teacher of Greek, first in Florence 1410-1414 then establishes humanist school in Ferrara under patronage of Este Dukes)

**Marquis Ludovico Gonzaga 1444-1478:** educated at school of Vittorino, serves as military captain for Milan), loyal follower of Francesco Sforza; German wife Barbara of Brandenburg

**Patronage: Paintings by Mantegna\*** -- frescoes of ducal family  
Urban architecture: extensive building projects, secular & ecclesiastical  
Leon Battista Alberti designs churches of San Sebastian & San Andrea  
Ecclesiastical offices: son Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (Mantegna's fresco)

\* **ANDREA MANTEGNA 1441-1506** career begins in Padua, then Mantua under Gonzaga: Mantua 1458-74 Camera delle Sposi (Wedding Chamber): Triumphs of Caesar 1495-96 Madonna della Victoria: celebrates victory at Fornovo

**Gianfrancesco II, Marquis 1484-1519** military commander for Venice 1489-98 1495 leads Italian League to victory over French army of Charles VIII

**Isabella d'Este: wife**, well educated daughter of Este Duke of Ferrara patron of artists & humanists at court of Mantua in his absence

**Federico II 1519-1540 Imperial title of Duke** granted for military service Patronage of arts, prominent military commander both for Papacy & Empire

**DUCHY OF URBINO:** ruled by Montefeltro family who resist Papal claims to territory until late 14th C, then become papal condottieri & allies

**FEDERICO OF MONTEFELTRO 1444 Signore of Urbino; Duke 1474-1482:**

illegitimate, succeeds to power after assassination of half-brother

1475 portrait by Justus of Ghent: shown reading in armor = exemplar of

Humanist prince, "arms & letters": educated at Mantua, school of Vittorino

arms: makes fortune as condottieri, trained by Niccolo Piccinino;

short term contracts, no alliances; triples territory of Urbino

Patronage: spends on art, building, paternalistic "good government"

**Library:** goal to create best library since antiquity; hires 40 scribes;

**Ducal Palace:** built 1460-70's; begun by architect Luciano Laurana;

**Piero della Francesca (1439-1493) portrait painting in ducal palace**

**GUIDOBALDO DUKE 1482-1508, married to Elisabetta Gonzaga of Mantua**

1502-3 Duchy conquered & occupied by Cesare Borgia; return 1504

1506 their court provides setting for Book of the Courtier (see over)

**FRANCESCO MARIA DELLA ROVERE** (Guidobaldo's nephew) next in line, 1508-1538 (related to reigning Pope Julius II, Giuliano della Rovere, 1504-13)

1513: deposed by Leo X, Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici made Duke of Urbino (needed a title)

1521-38: Francesco Maria reinstated, Della Rovere remain Dukes until

1631 annexed to Papal States: rare case of papal dynasty surviving founder

(over)

## **BALDASSARE CASTIGLIONE: THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER 1528**

= dialogue among courtiers (including women) set in Urbino in 1506

Castiglione: nobleman in service to Duke of Mantua, then Duke of Urbino, Papal Rome

Career under Julius II (military), Leo X (Ambassador to Urbino),

Clement VII – he was papal nuncio to Spain during the Sack of Rome

*Excerpts: This treatise presents the portrait of the ideal Renaissance courtier in service to a Prince; it is a self-improvement manual for the upper class gentleman trying to maintain his position in a princely court, such as the Duchy of Urbino in Italy and later London or Paris; the goal is to become the "perfect courtier," someone the Prince can trust and respect and who could, as a result, be in a position to give advice to the Prince – but always subtly, unobtrusively.*

I am of the opinion that the principal and true profession of the Courtier ought to be that of arms; which I would have him follow actively above all else, and be known among others as bold and strong, and loyal to whomsoever he serves. And he will win a reputation for these good qualities by exercising them at all times and in all places, since one may never fail in this without severest censure.... And....I would have him well built and shapely of limb, and would have him show and lightness and suppleness, and know all bodily exercises that befit a man of war: whereof I think the first should be to handle every sort of weapon well on foot and on horse, to understand the advantages of each, and especially to be familiar with those weapons that are ordinarily used among gentlemen....

### *Imitation of good models:*

Therefore he who wishes to be a good pupil, besides performing his tasks well, must put forth every effort to resemble his master, and, if it were possible, to transform himself into his master. And when he feels that he has made some progress, it will be very profitable to observe different men of the same calling, and governing himself with that good judgment which must ever be his guide, to go about selecting now this thing from one and that thing from another. And as the bee in the green meadows is ever wont to rob the flowers among the grass, so our Courtier must steal this grace from all who seem to possess it, taking from each that part which shall most be worthy praise.

### *On acting with natural grace: sprezzatura*

But having before now often considered whence this grace springs, laying aside those men who have it by nature, I find one universal rule concerning it, which seems to me worth more in this matter than any other in all things human that are done or said: and that is to avoid affectation to the uttermost and as it were a very sharp and dangerous rock; and, to use possibly a new word, to practice in everything a certain *sprezzatura* (nonchalance) that shall conceal design and show that what is done and said is done without effort and almost without thought. From this I believe grace is in large measure derived, because everyone knows the difficulty of those things that are rare and well done, and therefore facility in them excites the highest admiration; while on the other hand, to strive and as the saying is "to drag by the hair," is extremely ungraceful, and makes us esteem everything slightly, however great it be. Accordingly we may affirm that to be true art which does not appear to be art; nor to anything must we give greater care than to conceal art, for if it is discovered, it quite destroys our credit and brings us into small esteem.

### *On avoiding affectation:*

Our Courtier then will be esteemed excellent and will attain grace in everything, particularly in speaking, if he avoids affectation; into which fault many fall, and often more than others, some of us Lombards (from Milan), who, if they have been a year away from home, on their return at once begin to speak Roman, sometimes Spanish or French, and God knows how. And all this comes from over zeal to appear widely informed; in such fashion do men devote care and assiduity to acquiring a very odious fault. And truly it would be no light task for me, if I were to try in these discussions of ours to use those antique Tuscan words that are quite rejected by the usage of the Tuscans.

Excerpts from *The Courtier [Il Corteggiano]* by Baldassare Castiglione, Leonard Eckstein Opdycke, trans. published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903.



