

Notes for Machiavelli's "The Prince"

Richard Walters 2017

Background

1. Why read The Prince?
 - a. Political Realism: Is truth more important than ideals?
 - b. Is what Machiavelli says a true, unfiltered account of politics?
 - c. Is it possible that ethics are incompatible with politics?
 - d. Do the ends justify the means?
 - e. Is this a turning point for philosophy? Is it the beginning of the modern era? (Leo Strauss)
 - f. "Mirror for Princes" genre
 - i. We will look at Erasmus' "Manual for a Christian Knight" next.
 - g. Was Machiavelli a materialist? He did reject formal and final causation and teleological views of nature. He rejected the idea that philosophy was higher than politics.
 - h. Machiavelli rejected religion as something invented by man. And a prince shouldn't believe, but should appear to believe. The people however, can be more easily controlled if they are religious, so he was for religion as a means to power.
2. Italy/Florence circa 1500
 - a. Machiavelli lived in a very tumultuous period in history, in an area that changed governments frequently.
 - b. France, Spain, Switzerland, The Pope and The Holy Roman Empire, battled constantly for control. This is the time of the Borgias, the decline of Venice and the Doges (war with Ottomans)
 - c. Florence is liberated from the Medici family from 1494-1512
 - d. Church state building in 1502 and 1503 by the Borgias (Cesar and his illegitimate father Pope Alexander VI.
3. Introduction. Who is Machiavelli?
 - a. Statesman and ambassador
 - b. Commanded the Florentine Militia to victory over Pisa
 - c. Poet and Playwright
 - d. Tortured under the Medici's
4. What is a Principality?
5. Main Ideas of the Prince
 - a. It is written as a guide book for a new prince and is dedicated to Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici. Earlier versions of the text exist without the dedication leading some, like Jean

Jacques Rousseau to think it was a satire. Machiavelli was, after all, a poet and playwright as well as a statesman.

- b. Morality of convenience, keeping up appearances, and ruling through fear.
- c. Ends Justify the means, eliminating rivals, necessary violence (preferably in one move).
- d. Anti-Catholic, Admiration of Cesare Borgia, political realism
- e. Machiavelli uses many historical examples to illustrate main themes.
- f. Circumstance is critical to success. The right person at the wrong time will go nowhere.
- g. Don't rely on prayer. "Armed prophets prevail."
- h. It is more important to have the support of the people than the nobles.
- i. Machiavelli's military assessments and strategies. In particular, the use of mercenaries and auxiliaries.



Text Outline

1. Hereditary Principalities
 - a. Easily kept due to tradition.
2. Mixed Principalities
 - a. Warning
 - i. "... men change their rulers willingly, hoping to better themselves, and this hope induces them to take up arms against him who rules: wherein they are deceived, because they afterwards find by experience they have gone from bad to worse."
 - ii. "...you have enemies in all those whom you have injured in seizing that principality, and you are not able to keep those friends who put you there because of your not being able to satisfy them in the way they expected"
 - b. Conclusion
 - i. "...in entering a province one has always need of the goodwill of the natives."
 - c. Example
 - i. Louis XII, of France, took Milan twice. The second time he made sure to "clear out the suspects, and to strengthen himself in the weakest places."
 - d. Common language can assist in assimilation of a people.
 - i. "He who has annexed them, if he wishes to hold them, has only to bear in mind two considerations: the one, that the family of their former lord is extinguished; the other, that neither their laws nor their taxes are altered, so that in a very short time they will become entirely one body with the old principality."
 - e. Without a common language
 - i. Residing in the new land can make the conversion quicker. "If one is on the spot, disorders are seen as they spring up, and one can quickly remedy them; but if one is not at hand, they heard of only when they are one can no longer remedy them."
 - ii. "The other and **better course is to send colonies to one or two places, which may be as keys to that state**, for it necessary either to do this or else to keep there a great number of cavalry and infantry."
 - iii. "...these colonies are not costly, they are more faithful, they injure less, and the injured, as has been said, being poor and scattered, cannot hurt."
 - f. Caution
 - i. **"...men ought either to be well treated or crushed, because they can avenge themselves of lighter injuries, of more serious ones they cannot; therefore the injury that is to be done to a man ought to be of such a kind that one does not stand in fear of revenge."**
 - ii. Maintaining a garrison in a colony is too costly. The acquisition becomes a loss.
 - g. Neighbors

- i. "...the prince who holds a country differing in the above respects ought to make himself the head and defender of his powerful neighbors, and to weaken the more powerful amongst them, taking care that no foreigner as powerful as himself shall, by any accident, get a footing there"
- h. Good Example: Romans
 - i. "The Romans were brought into Greece by the Aetolians; and in every other country where they obtained a footing they were brought in by the inhabitants."
 - ii. "...the usual course of affairs is that, as soon as a powerful foreigner enters a country, all the subject states are drawn to him, moved by the hatred which they feel against the ruling power."
 - iii. **"The Romans, in the countries which they annexed, observed closely these measures; they sent colonies and maintained friendly relations with the minor powers, without increasing their strength; they kept down the greater, and did not allow any strong foreign powers to gain authority."**
 - iv. Concerning Philip and Antiochus in Greece: **"Therefore, the Romans, foreseeing troubles, dealt with them at once, and, even to avoid a war, would not let them come to a head, for they knew that war is not to be avoided, but is only put off to the advantage of others."**
 - v. The Romans did not heed the saying: "Let us enjoy the benefits of the time." They always looked to the future.
- i. Bad Example: Louis XII of France
 - i. Louis XII did the opposite.
 - ii. Background: "King Louis was brought into Italy by the ambition of the Venetians, who desired to obtain half the state of Lombardy by his intervention."
 - iii. "...he was forced to accept those friendships which he could get"
 - iv. "Let any one now consider with what little difficulty the king could have maintained his position in Italy had he observed the rules above laid down, and kept all his friends secure and protected; for although they were numerous they were both weak and timid, some afraid of the Church, some of the Venetians"
 - v. Louis XII left to go fight in the Romagna. And next he had to fight Pope Alexander in Tuscany. And next divided Naples with Spain, and placed the Spanish in a strong enough position to take Italy away from him.
 - vi. "Therefore Louis made these **five errors**:
 1. he destroyed the minor powers,
 2. he increased the strength of one of the greater powers in Italy,
 3. he brought in a foreign power,
 4. he did not settle in the country,
 5. he did not send colonies."
 - vii. "And if anyone should say: King Louis yielded the Romagna to Alexander and the kingdom to Spain to avoid war, I answer for the reasons given above that a

blunder ought never be perpetrated to avoid war, because it is not to be avoided, but is only deferred to your disadvantage.”

- j. Morale
 - i. “...he who is the cause of another becoming powerful is ruined; because that predominancy has been brought about either by astuteness or else by force, and both are distrusted by him who has been raised to power.”
3. Compare and Contrast having powerful barons or not: Darius’ Empire vs France again.
- a. “... principalities of which one has record are found to be governed in two different
 - b. ways: either by a prince, with a body of servants, who assist him to govern the kingdom as ministers by his favour and permission; or by a prince and barons, who hold that dignity by antiquity of blood and not by the grace of the prince.”
 - c. “The entire monarchy of the Turk is governed by one lord, the others are his servants; and, dividing his kingdom into sanjaks, he sends there different administrators, and shifts and changes them as he chooses.”
 - d. “But the King of France is placed in the midst of an ancient body of lords, acknowledged by their own subjects, and beloved by them; they have their own prerogatives, nor can the king take these away except at his peril.”
 - e. “Therefore, he who considers both of these states will recognize great difficulties in seizing the state of the Turk, but, once it is conquered, great ease in holding it.”
 - f. “Hence, he who attacks the Turk must bear in mind that he will find him united, and he will have to rely more on his own strength than on the revolt of others; but, if once the Turk has been conquered, and routed in the field in such a way that he cannot replace his armies, there is nothing to fear but the family of the prince, and, this being exterminated, there remains no one to fear”
 - g. “The contrary happens in kingdoms governed like that of France, because one can easily enter there by gaining over some baron of the kingdom, for one always finds malcontents and such as desire a change. Such men, for the reasons given, can open the way into the state and render the victory easy; but if you wish to hold it afterwards, you meet with infinite difficulties, both from those who have assisted you and from those you have crushed. Nor is it enough for you to have exterminated the family of the prince, because the lords that remain make themselves the heads of fresh movements against you, and as you are unable either to satisfy or exterminate them, that state is lost whenever time brings the opportunity.”
4. Governing New Cities with different Laws
- a. First Course – Ruin them
 - b. Second Course – Reside There
 - c. Third Course – Permit them to Live under their own Law, with a tribute and oligarchy.
 - d. Taking a Free territory
 - i. **“...he who becomes master of a city accustomed to freedom and does not destroy it, may expect to be destroyed by it, for in rebellion it has always the watch-word of liberty and its ancient privileges as a rallying point, which neither time nor benefits will ever cause it to forget.”**

- e. Taking a principedom
 - i. “But when cities or countries are accustomed to live under a prince, and his family is exterminated, they, being on the one hand accustomed to obey and on the other hand not having the old prince, cannot agree in making one from amongst themselves, and they do not know how to govern themselves. For this reason they are very slow to take up arms, and a prince can gain them to himself and secure them much more easily.”
5. Principalities acquired by arms or ability.
- a. Morale: attained by difficulty, easily kept.
 - b. “A wise man ought always to follow the paths beaten by great men, and to imitate those who have been supreme, so that if his ability does not equal theirs, at least it will savour of it. Let him act like **the clever archers** who, designing to hit the mark which yet appears too far distant, and knowing the limits to which the strength of their bow attains, take aim much higher than the mark, not to reach by their strength or arrow to so great a height, but to be able with the aid of so high an aim to hit the mark they wish to reach.”
 - c. Theme: Men who rise by their own ability, do so in a time favorable to their talent.
 - d. Good Examples
 - i. **Moses** – found the people enslaved and oppressed by Egypt
 - ii. **Cyrus** – “... should find the Persians discontented with the government of the Medes, and the Medes soft and effeminate through their long peace.”
 - iii. **Romulus** – abandoned at birth in Alba, to find a new land
 - iv. **Theseus** – The Athenians were dispersed.
 - v. **“And in examining their actions and lives one cannot see that they owed anything to fortune beyond opportunity, which brought them the material to mold into the form which seemed best to them. Without that opportunity their powers of mind would have been extinguished, and without those powers the opportunity would have come in vain.”**
 - vi. “Those who by valorous ways become princes, like these men, **acquire a principality with difficulty, but they keep it with ease.**”
 - e. Hard to introduce new things.
 - i. “...it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.”
 - f. Can innovators rely on themselves, or upon prayer?
 - i. **“Hence it is that all armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed.”**
 - ii. “And thus it is necessary to take such measures that, when they believe no longer, it may be possible to make them believe by force.”
6. Prince by Good Fortune

- a. Morale: Have little trouble attaining, but many problems when they reach the summit.
 - b. The only way to keep a land is for a man of ability to lay the foundations that would have been created through conquest afterward.
7. Examples
- a. Francesco Sforza – man of ability, kept his land because he conquered it.
 - b. Cesare Borgia – inherited land, and did everything he could, but still could not keep it.
 - i. Extensive story of Cesare Borgia. He does almost everything right, but his power was based on the authority of his father, Pope Alexander VI. So, when his father dies, there is the trouble of a new Pope, and he has not finished the necessary steps below.
 - 1. “...he decided to act in four ways.
 - a. Firstly, by exterminating the families of those lords whom he had despoiled, so as to take away that pretext from the Pope.
 - b. Secondly, by winning to himself all the gentlemen of Rome, so as to be able to curb the Pope with their aid, as has been observed.
 - c. Thirdly, by converting the college more to himself.
 - d. Fourthly, by acquiring so much power before the Pope should die that he could by his own measures resist the first shock.”
 - 2. But, he was sick when his father died. And he did not have the personal power to complete his designs.
8. Summary of Rules that made Cesare Borgia a good example
- a. to secure himself in his new principality,
 - b. to win friends, to overcome either by force or fraud,
 - c. to make himself beloved and feared by the people,
 - d. to be followed and revered by the soldiers,
 - e. to exterminate those who have power or reason to hurt him,
 - f. to change the old order of things for new,
 - g. to be severe and gracious, magnanimous and liberal,
 - h. to destroy a disloyal soldiery and to create new,
 - i. to maintain friendship with kings and princes in such a way that they must help him with zeal and offend with caution
9. Cesare Borgia’s downfall
- a. **“He who believes that new benefits will cause great personages to forget old injuries is deceived.** Therefore, the duke erred in his choice (of Pope), and it was the cause of his ultimate ruin.”
10. Prince Obtains Principality by Wickedness
- a. **Agathocles** – killed all senators and the richest of the people by a ruse.
 - i. “Therefore, he who considers the actions and the genius of this man will see nothing, or little, which can be attributed to fortune, inasmuch as he attained pre-eminence, as is shown above, not by the favour of any one, but step by step in the military profession, which steps were gained with a thousand troubles

and perils, and were afterwards boldly held by him with any hazards and dangers. Yet it cannot be called talent to slay fellow-citizens, to deceive friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; such methods may gain empire, but not glory. Still, if the courage of Agathocles in entering into and extricating himself from dangers be considered, together with his greatness of mind in enduring overcoming hardships, it cannot be seen why he should be esteemed less than the most notable captain. **Nevertheless, his barbarous cruelty and inhumanity with infinite wickednesses do not permit him to be celebrated among the most excellent men.**"

b. Oliverotto da Fermo

- i. He contrives to be welcomed with a large number of troops, and honored.
 - ii. During a celebration dinner, discussion gives him an opportunity and "he rose at once, saying that such matters ought to be discussed in a more private place, and he betook himself to a chamber, whither Giovanni and the rest of the citizens went in after him. No sooner were they seated than soldiers issued from secret places and slaughtered Giovanni and the rest."
- c. How Do Such Wicked Men accomplish deeds like this and keep power?
- i. "Hence it is to be remarked that, in seizing a state, the usurper ought to examine closely into all those injuries which it is necessary for him to inflict, and to do them all at one stroke so as not to have to repeat them daily; and thus by not unsettling men he will be able to reassure them, and win them to himself by benefits.... **For injuries ought to be done all at one time, so that, being tasted less, they offend less; benefits ought to be given little by little, so that the flavour of them may last longer.**"

11. Civil Principalities

- a. Definition: "where a leading citizen becomes the prince of his country, not by wickedness or any intolerable violence, but by the favour of his fellow citizens"
- b. "Because in all cities these two distinct parties are found, and from this it arises that the people do not wish to be ruled nor oppressed by the nobles, and the nobles wish to rule and oppress the people; and from these two opposite desires there arises in cities one of three results, either a principality, self-government, or anarchy."
- c. **Why make a prince? "... the nobles, seeing they cannot withstand the people, begin to cry up the reputation of one of themselves, and they make him a prince, so that under his shadow they can give vent to their ambitions. The people, finding they cannot resist the nobles, also cry up the reputation of one of themselves, and make him a prince so as to be defended by his authority."**
- d. Two types of Nobles.
 - i. Bind themselves to your fortune. If they are weak, it doesn't matter.
 - ii. Do not bind themselves to your fortune due to their own ambitious ends. Fear these as if they were open enemies.
- e. **It is more important to have the support of the people than the nobles.**

- i. “Further, the prince is compelled to live always with the same people, but he can do well without the same nobles, being able to make and unmake them daily, and to give or take away authority when it pleases him.”
 - ii. “Therefore, one who becomes a prince through the favour of the people ought to keep them friendly, and this he can easily do seeing they only ask not to be oppressed by him. But one who, in opposition to the people, becomes a prince by the favour of the nobles, ought, above everything, to seek to win the people over to himself, and this he may easily do if he takes them under his protection. Because men, when they receive good from him of whom they were expecting evil, are bound more closely to their benefactor; thus the people quickly become more devoted to him than if he had been raised to the principality by their favours; and the prince can win their affections in many ways, but as these vary according to the circumstances one cannot give fixed rules, so I omit them; but, I repeat, it is necessary for a prince to have the people friendly, otherwise he has no security in adversity.”
- f. Example: **Nabis, Prince of the Spartans**
 - i. Successfully defended himself against the Greeks and Romans because he was secured by the strength of the people whom he was able to command.
- g. Governing by Magistrates
 - i. The Magistrates may keep the peace, but they usurp the authority of the Prince because the people become accustomed to listening to the Magistrate first, and not the Prince.
 - ii. “...a prince cannot rely upon what he observes in quiet times, when citizens had need of the state, because then everyone agrees with him; they all promise, and when death is far distant they all wish to die for him; but in troubled times, when the state has need of its citizens, then he finds but few.”
 - iii. **“Therefore a wise prince ought to adopt such a course that his citizens will always in every sort and kind of circumstance have need of the state and of him, and then he will always find them faithful.”**

12. Measuring the Strength of a Principality

- a. “I say that I consider those are able to support themselves by their own resources who can, either by abundance of men or money, raise a sufficient army to join battle against anyone who comes to attack them; and I consider those always to have need of others who cannot show themselves against the enemy in the field, but are forced to defend themselves by sheltering behind walls.”
- b. Advice to a prince: **“... to provision and fortify their towns, and not on any account to defend the country.”**
- c. Example of Germany: It would be tedious and difficult to assault them
 - i. Fortified Towns, proper ditches and walls
 - ii. Sufficient artillery
 - iii. Well provisioned, food, drink and ammo
 - iv. People kept employed: good morale

- v. Regularly drill in Military Exercises
- vi. Have many strong ordinances to uphold law
- d. But what of the objection that allowing yourself to fall siege surrenders property and country, and that the morale of the people will falter watching it burn?
 - i. "I answer that a powerful and courageous prince will overcome all such difficulties by giving at one time hope to his subjects that the evil will not be for long, at another time fear of the cruelty of the enemy, then preserving himself adroitly from those subjects who seem to him to be too bold."
 - ii. After the property has been burnt "...they are so much the more ready to unite with their prince, he appearing to be under obligations to them now that their houses have been burnt and their possessions ruined in his defence. For **it is the nature of men to be bound by the benefits they confer as much as by those they receive.**"

13. Ecclesiastical Principalities

- a. "...they are sustained by the ordinances of religion, which are so all-powerful, and of such a character that the principalities may be held no matter how their princes behave and live. These princes alone have states and do not defend them, they have subjects and do not rule them; and the states, although unguarded, are not taken from them, and the subjects, although not ruled, do not care, and they have neither the desire nor the ability to alienate themselves. Such principalities only are secure and happy. But being upheld by powers, to which the human mind cannot reach, I shall speak no more of them, because, being exalted and maintained by God, it would be the act of a presumptuous and rash man to discuss them."

14. Soldiery and Mercenaries

- a. "The chief foundations of all states, new as well as old or composite, are good laws and good arms; and as there cannot be good laws where the state is not well armed, it follows that where they are well armed they have good laws. I shall leave the laws out of the discussion and shall speak of the arms."
- b. Types of Arms
 - i. Mercenaries
 - 1. Cannot be depended upon. He has little good to say about them. Basically they are cowards.
 - 2. Example: Phillip of Macedon, who turned on the Thebans after fighting for them.
 - 3. Example: Francesco Sforza turned on the Milanese after fighting with them against the Venetians at Caravaggio.
 - ii. Auxiliaries (foreign Troops, allies marching under their own leadership)
 - 1. This is an all or nothing strategy. If you lose, you lose everything, and if you win you might still lose what you gained.
 - 2. "Therefore, let him who has no desire to conquer make use of these arms, for they are much more hazardous than mercenaries, because with them the ruin is ready made; they are all united, all yield

obedience to others; but with mercenaries, when they have conquered, more time and better opportunities are needed to injure you; they are not all of one community, they are found and paid by you, and a third party, which you have made their head, is not able all at once to assume enough authority to injure you. In conclusion, in mercenaries dastardy is most dangerous; in auxiliaries, valour. The wise prince, therefore, has always avoided these arms and turned to his own; and has been willing rather to lose with them than to conquer with others, not deeming that a real victory which is gained with the arms of others.”

3. Example (there are several others): Emperor of Constantinople unleashed the Turks on Greece, and lost Greece to the Turkish control.

iii. Mixed

1. Cesare Borgia entered into Romagna with Auxiliaries, and then switched to Mercenaries (the Orsini and Vitelli), and finally used his own men. His reputation as a leader was reflected under each command, never being more highly esteemed than when he was “complete master of his own forces.”
2. Charles of France built up the infantry, but Louis used the Switzers and disbanded the infantry.

iv. Lesson to be inferred:

1. “I wish also to recall to memory an instance from the Old Testament applicable to this subject. (1 Samuel 17) David offered himself to Saul to fight with Goliath, the Philistine champion, and, to give him courage, Saul armed him with his own weapons; which David rejected as soon as he had them on his back, saying he could make no use of them, and that he wished to meet the enemy with his sling and his knife. **In conclusion, the arms of others either fall from your back, or they weigh you down, or they bind you fast.**”
2. “Therefore, if he who rules a principality cannot recognize evils until they are upon him, he is not truly wise; and this insight is given to few. And if the first disaster to the Roman Empire should be examined, it will be found to have commenced only with the enlisting of the Goths; because from that time the vigour of the Roman Empire began to decline, and all that valour which had raised it passed away to others.”

15. The Art of War

- a. “A PRINCE ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline; for this is the sole art that belongs to him who rules, and it is of such force that it not only upholds those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from a private station to that rank. And, on the contrary, it is seen that when princes have thought more of ease than of arms they have lost their states. And the first cause of your losing it is to neglect this art; and what enables you to acquire a state is to be master of the art.”

- b. "He ought never, therefore, to have out of his thoughts this subject of war, and in peace he should addict himself more to its exercise than in war; this he can do in two ways, the one by action, the other by study."
 - i. Action
 - 1. Learn to know your country and terrain.
 - 2. "... it teaches him to surprise his enemy, to select quarters, to lead armies, to array the battle, to besiege towns to advantage."
 - 3. "Philopoemen, Prince of the Achaeans, among other praises which writers have bestowed on him, is commended because in time of peace he never had anything in his mind but the rules of war."
 - ii. Study
 - 1. "...to exercise the intellect the prince should read histories, and study there the actions of illustrious men, to see how they have borne themselves in war, to examine the causes of their victories and defeat, so as to avoid the latter and imitate the former; and above all do as an illustrious man did, who took as an exemplar one who had been praised and famous before him, and whose achievements and deeds he always kept in his mind, as it is said Alexander the Great imitated Achilles, Caesar Alexander, Scipio Cyrus. And whoever reads the life of Cyrus, written by Xenophon, will recognize afterwards in the life of Scipio how that imitation was his glory, and how in chastity, affability, humanity, and liberality Scipio conformed to those things which have been written of Cyrus by Xenophon. A wise prince ought to observe some such rules, and never in peaceful times stand idle, but increase his resources with industry in such a way that they may be available to him in adversity, so that if fortune changes it may find him prepared to resist her blows."

16. Things that incur praise or blame.

- a. "But, it being my intention to write a thing which shall be useful to him who apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for **many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.**"
- b. "Hence it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity."
 - i. Lists
 - 1. Liberal vs Miserly
 - 2. Generous vs Rapacious
 - 3. Cruel vs Compassionate
 - 4. Faithless vs Faithful
 - 5. Effeminate and Cowardly vs Bold and Brave

6. Affable vs Haughty
7. Lascivious vs Chaste
8. Sincere vs Cunning
9. Hard vs Easy
10. Grave vs Frivolous
11. Religious vs Unbelieving
12. Etc.

- c. "And I know that everyone will confess that it would be most praiseworthy in a prince to exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good; but **because they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed, for human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for him to be sufficiently prudent that he may know how to avoid the reproach of those vices which would lose him his state....**"
- d. "And again, he need not make himself uneasy at incurring a reproach for those vices without which the state can only be saved with difficulty, for if everything is considered carefully, it will be found that something which looks like virtue, if followed, would be his ruin; whilst something else, which looks like vice, yet followed brings him security and prosperity."

17. Liberality and Meanness

- a. "I say that it would be well to be reputed liberal. Nevertheless, liberality exercised in a way that does not bring you the reputation for it, injures you.... "
- b. "Therefore, a prince, not being able to exercise this virtue of liberality in such a way that it is recognized, except to his cost, if he is **wise he ought not to fear the reputation of being mean**, for in time he will come to be more considered than if liberal, seeing that with his economy his revenues are enough, that he can defend himself against all attacks, and is able to engage in enterprises without burdening his people; thus it comes to pass that he exercises liberality towards all from whom he does not take, who are numberless, and meanness towards those to whom he does not give, who are few."
- c. Objections:
 - i. Cesar was liberal and successful. Yes, but he was buying influence as was not yet a prince as he could be. The reputation of liberality is necessary to gain the people if you do not already have their loyalty.
 - ii. But what of many other great princes considered Liberal? Princes can be "liberal" so long as they are spending the money of others, and not that of their own people.
 1. "And of that which is neither yours nor your subjects' you can be a ready giver, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander; because it does not take away your reputation if you squander that of others, but adds to it; it is only squandering your own that injures you."
- d. Conclusion:
 - i. **"Therefore it is wiser to have a reputation for meanness which brings reproach without hatred, than to be compelled through seeking a reputation for liberality to incur a name for rapacity which begets reproach with hatred."**

18. Is it better to be Loved or Feared? Rules concerning Cruelty and Clemency.

- a. "Therefore a prince, so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to mind the reproach of cruelty...."
- b. "...is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with. Because this is to be asserted in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you."
- c. **"...men have less scruple in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails."**
- d. "... when it is necessary for him to proceed against the life of someone, he must do it on proper justification and for manifest cause, but above all things he must keep his hands off the property of others, because men more quickly forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony."
- e. Example: Hannibal.
- f. Summary: "... he must endeavor only to avoid hatred."

19. Keeping Faith

- a. Princes should be raised to use both the qualities of a beast and a man.
 - i. "This has been figuratively taught to princes by ancient writers, who describe how Achilles and many other princes of old were given to the Centaur Chiron to nurse, who brought them up in his discipline; which means solely that, as they had for a teacher one who was half beast and half man, so it is necessary for a prince to know how to make use of both natures, and that one without the other is not durable."
- b. Maxim: Don't keep faith when observances can be turned against you.
 - i. "...endless modern examples could be given, showing how many treaties and engagements have been made void and of no effect through the faithlessness of princes; and he who has known best how to employ the fox has succeeded best."
- c. "But it is necessary to know well how to disguise this characteristic, and to be a great pretender and dissembler; and men are so simple, and so subject to present necessities, that he who seeks to deceive will always find someone who will allow himself to be deceived."
- d. **"Therefore it is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have them and always to observe them is injurious, and that to appear to have them is useful; to appear merciful, faithful, humane, religious, upright, and to be so, but with a mind so framed that should you require not to be so, you may be able and know how to change to the opposite."**

- e. “And you have to understand this, that a prince, especially a new one, cannot observe all those things for which men are esteemed, being often forced, in order to maintain the state, to act contrary to faith, friendship, humanity, and religion. **Therefore it is necessary for him to have a mind ready to turn itself accordingly as the winds and variations of fortune force it, yet, as I have said above, not to diverge from the good if he can avoid doing so, but, if compelled, then to know how to set about it.**”
 - f. “For this reason a prince ought to take care that he never lets anything slip from his lips that is not replete with the above-named five qualities, that he may appear to him who sees and hears him altogether merciful, faithful, humane, upright, and religious. There is nothing more necessary to appear to have than this last quality, inasmuch as men judge generally more by the eye than by the hand, because it belongs to everybody to see you, to few to come in touch with you. Everyone sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are, and those few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them; and in the actions of all men, and especially of princes, which it is not prudent to challenge, one judges by the result.”
 - g. “...the vulgar are always taken by what a thing seems to be and by what comes of it; and in the world there are only the vulgar, for the few find a place there only when the many have no ground to rest on.”
20. Avoid being despised and Hated.
- a. “...the prince must consider, as has been in part said before, how to avoid those things which will make him hated or contemptible.”
 - b. Contemptable things to avoid:
 - i. To be Rapacious. Don’t take the property and women of your subjects.
 - ii. To be Fickle
 - iii. To be Frivolous
 - iv. To be Effeminate
 - v. To be Mean-spirited
 - vi. To be Irresolute
 - c. Appear to be:
 - i. Great
 - ii. Courageous
 - iii. Grave
 - iv. Brave (fortuitous)
 - v. Judgements are irrevocable
 - vi. Not easily deceived
 - d. High esteem deters conspiracy.
 - i. “... one of the most efficacious remedies that a prince can have against conspiracies is not to be hated and despised by the people, for he who conspires against a prince always expects to please them by his removal; but when the conspirator can only look forward to offending them, he will not have the courage to take such a course, for the difficulties that confront a conspirator are infinite.”

- e. Example: Annibale Bentivoglio and all but one of his family were murdered, and the people so loved them that they rose up and murdered all the Canneschi who deposed them. They even put a temporary ruler in place until the young Giovanni was old enough to rule.
- f. "...princes ought to leave affairs of reproach to the management of others, and keep those of grace in their own hands."
- g. Examples in the Roman Emperors from Marcus Aurelius to Maximinus.
 - i. "...princes cannot help being hated by someone, they ought, in the first place, to avoid being hated by every one, and when they cannot compass this, they ought to endeavour with the utmost diligence to avoid the hatred of the most powerful.
 - ii. "...a prince wishing to keep his state is very often forced to do evil; for when that body is corrupt whom you think you have need of to maintain yourself — it may be either the people or the soldiers or the nobles — you have to submit to its humours and to gratify them, and then good works will do you harm."
 - iii. "Commodus, Severus, Antoninus Caracalla, and Maximinus, you will find them all cruel and rapacious — men who, to satisfy their soldiers, did not hesitate to commit every kind of iniquity against the people; and all, except Severus, came to a bad end."
 - iv. **"Therefore a prince, new to the principality, cannot imitate the actions of Marcus, nor, again, is it necessary to follow those of Severus, but he ought to take from Severus those parts which are necessary to found his state, and from Marcus those which are proper and glorious to keep a state that may already be stable and firm."**

21. Fortresses

- a. "Some princes, so as to hold securely the state, have disarmed their subjects; others have kept their subject towns by factions; others have fostered enmities against themselves; others have laid themselves out to gain over those whom they distrusted in the beginning of their governments; some have built fortresses; some have overthrown and destroyed them. And although one cannot give a final judgment on all one of these things unless one possesses the particulars of those states in which a decision has to be made, nevertheless I will speak as comprehensively as the matter of itself will admit."
 - i. When to Disarm your Subjects
 1. Never when a new prince
 2. "But when you disarm them, you at once offend them by showing that you distrust them, either for cowardice or for want of loyalty, and either of these opinions breeds hatred against you."
 3. When acquiring a new state, you must disarm it. All armed in the state should be your own soldiers.
 - ii. When to Faction Towns
 1. "I do not believe that factions can ever be of use."
 2. Weaker forces will always assist an outside force.

3. Balance does not exist as hoped.
 - iii. When to Foster Enmities
 1. “Without doubt princes become great when they overcome the difficulties and obstacles by which they are confronted, and therefore fortune, especially when she desires to make a new prince great, who has a greater necessity to earn renown than an hereditary one, **causes enemies to arise and form designs against him**, in order that he may have the opportunity of overcoming them, and by them to mount higher, as by a ladder which his enemies have raised. For this reason many consider that a wise prince, when he has the opportunity, ought with craft to foster some animosity against himself, so that, having crushed it, his renown may rise higher.”
 - iv. When to Gain over those you distrust
 1. “Princes, especially new ones, have found more fidelity and assistance in those men who in the beginning of their rule were distrusted than among those who in the beginning were trusted.”
 2. “...those men who at the commencement of a principedom have been hostile, if they are of a description to need assistance to support themselves, can always be gained over with the greatest ease, and they will be tightly held to serve the prince with fidelity, inasmuch as they know it to be very necessary for them to cancel by deeds the bad impression which he had formed of them.”
 3. **“I must not fail to warn a prince, who by means of secret favours has acquired a new state, that he must well consider the reasons which induced those to favour him who did so; and if it be not a natural affection towards him, but only discontent with their government, then he will only keep them friendly with great trouble and difficulty, for it will be impossible to satisfy them.”**
 - v. When to Build Fortresses and When do Destroy them.
 1. “Fortresses, therefore, are useful or not according to circumstances; if they do you good in one way they injure you in another. And this question can be reasoned thus: the prince who has more to fear from the people than from foreigners ought to build fortresses, but he who has more to fear from foreigners than from the people ought to leave them alone.”
 2. “For this reason the best possible fortress is — not to be hated by the people, because, although you may hold the fortresses, yet they will not save you if the people hate you, for there will never be wanting foreigners to assist a people who have taken arms against you.”
22. How to Gain Renoun (more about taking sides and acting)
- a. Example: **Ferdinand of Aragon**

- i. "...he devoted himself with a pious cruelty to driving out and clearing his kingdom of the Moors"
 - ii. "Under this same cloak he assailed Africa, he came down on Italy, he has finally attacked France; and thus his achievements and designs have always been great, and have kept the minds of his people in suspense and admiration and occupied with the issue of them. And his actions have arisen in such a way, one out of the other, that men have never been given time to work steadily against him."
- b. "A prince is also respected when he is either a true friend or a downright enemy, that to say, **when, without any reservation, he declares himself in favour of one party against the other; which course will always be more advantageous than standing neutral;** because if two of your powerful neighbours come to blows, they are of such a character that, if one of them conquers, you have either to fear him or not. In either case it will always be more advantageous for you to declare yourself and to make war strenuously; because, in the first case, if you do not declare yourself, you will invariably fall a prey to the conqueror, to the pleasure and satisfaction of him who has been conquered, and you will have no reasons to offer, nor anything to protect or to shelter you. Because he who conquers does not want doubtful friends who will not aid him in the time of trial; and he who loses will not harbour you because you did not willingly, sword in hand, court his fate."
- c. "...irresolute princes, to avoid present dangers, generally follow the neutral path, and are generally ruined. But when a prince declares himself gallantly in favour of one side, if the party with whom he allies himself conquers, although the victor may be powerful and may have him at his mercy, yet he is indebted to him, and there is established a bond of amity; and men are never so shameless as to become a monument of ingratitude by oppressing you."
- d. "... a prince ought to **take care never to make an alliance with one more powerful than himself for the purpose of attacking others,** unless necessity compels him, as is said above; because if he conquers you are at his discretion..."
- e. Example: "Venetians joined with France against the Duke of Milan, and this alliance, which caused their ruin, could have been avoided."
- f. "**Never let any Government imagine that it can choose perfectly safe courses;** rather let it expect to have to take very doubtful ones, because it is found in ordinary affairs that one never seeks to avoid one trouble without running into another; but prudence consists in knowing how to distinguish the character of troubles, and for choice to take the lesser evil."
- g. Almost as an afterthought to get back on topic: "Further, he ought to entertain the people with festivals and spectacles at convenient seasons of the year; and as every city is divided into guilds or into societies, he ought to hold such bodies in esteem, and associate with them sometimes, and show himself an example of courtesy and liberality; nevertheless, always maintaining the majesty of his rank, for this he must never consent to abate in anything."

23. Choosing secretaries (servants)

- a. Three types of intellect
 - i. Comprehends by itself
 - ii. Appreciates what others comprehend
 - iii. Neither comprehends by itself nor by the showing of others
- b. "But to enable a prince to form an opinion of his servant there is one test which never fails; when you see the servant thinking more of his own interests than of yours, and seeking inwardly his own profit in everything, such a man will never make a good servant, nor will you ever be able to trust him; because he who has the state of another in his hands ought never to think of himself, but always of his prince, and never pay any attention to matters in which the prince is not concerned."

24. Avoiding Flatterers

- a. "...there is no other way of guarding oneself from flatterers except letting men understand that to tell you the truth does not offend you; but when everyone may tell you the truth, respect for you abates. Therefore a wise prince ought to hold a third course by choosing the wise men in his state, and giving to them only the liberty of speaking the truth to him, and then only of those things of which he inquires, and of none others; but he ought to question them upon everything, and listen to their opinions, and afterwards form his own conclusions."
- b. **Fra Luca, a "man of affairs" under Maximilian had this to say of his majesty: "He consulted with no one, yet never got his own way in anything."**
- c. "A prince, therefore, ought always to take counsel, but only when he wishes and not when others wish; he ought rather to discourage everyone from offering advice unless he asks it; but, however, he ought to be a constant inquirer, and afterwards a patient listener concerning the things of which he inquired; also, on learning that any one, on any consideration, has not told him the truth, he should let his anger be felt."
- d. "...men will always prove untrue to you unless they are kept honest by constraint. Therefore it must be inferred that good counsels, whencesoever they come, are born of the wisdom of the prince, and not the wisdom of the prince from good counsels."

25. How Princes of Italy have lost their States

- a. Don't expect someone to restore you. Prepare for bad times in times of peace.

26. Fortune, Chance and Predetermination.

- a. **"Nevertheless, not to extinguish our free will, I hold it to be true that Fortune is the arbiter of one-half of our actions, but that she still leaves us to direct the other half, or perhaps a little less."**
- b. "I compare her to one of those raging rivers, which when in flood overflows the plains, sweeping away trees and buildings, bearing away the soil from place to place; everything flies before it, all yield to its violence, without being able in any way to withstand it; and yet, though its nature be such, it does not follow therefore that men, when the weather becomes fair, shall not make provision, both with defences and barriers, in such a manner that, rising again, the waters may pass away by canal, and their force be neither so unrestrained nor so dangerous. So it happens with fortune,

who shows her power where valour has not prepared to resist her, and thither she turns her forces where she knows that barriers and defences have not been raised to constrain her.”

- i. This is used as a metaphor for the state of Italy. She is without preparations and has fallen victim to fortune.
 - c. “I believe also that he will be successful who directs his actions according to the spirit of the times, and that he whose actions do not accord with the times will not be successful.”
 - d. “Changes in estate also issue from this, for if, to one who governs himself with caution and patience, times and affairs converge in such a way that his administration is successful, his fortune is made; but if times and affairs change, he is ruined if he does not change his course of action.”
 - e. **“But a man is not often found sufficiently circumspect to know how to accommodate himself to the change, both because he cannot deviate from what nature inclines him to, and also because, having always prospered by acting in one way, he cannot be persuaded that it is well to leave it; and, therefore, the cautious man, when it is time to turn adventurous, does not know how to do it, hence he is ruined; but had he changed his conduct with the times fortune would not have changed.”**
 - f. Example Pope Julius II, moved without caution in all of his actions. And he was successful. But this was his nature.
 - g. “For my part I consider that it is better to be adventurous than cautious, because **fortune is a woman**, and if you wish to keep her under it is necessary to beat and ill-use her; and it is seen that she allows herself to be mastered by the adventurous rather than by those who go to work more coldly. She is, therefore, always, woman-like, a lover of young men, because they are less cautious, more violent, and with more audacity command her.”
27. Is the time right to Liberate Italy from the Barbarians?
- a. “And if, as I said, it was necessary that the people of Israel should be captive so as to make manifest the ability of Moses; that the Persians should be oppressed by the Medes so as to discover the greatness of the soul of Cyrus; and that the Athenians should be dispersed to illustrate the capabilities of Theseus: then at the present time, in order to discover the virtue of an Italian spirit, it was necessary that Italy should be reduced to the extremity she is now in, that she should be more enslaved than the Hebrews, more oppressed than the Persians, more scattered than the Athenians; without head, without order, beaten, despoiled, torn, overrun; and to have endured every kind of desolation.”
 - b. “Further than this, how extraordinarily the ways of God have been manifested beyond example: the sea is divided, a cloud has led the way, the rock has poured forth water, it has rained manna, everything has contributed to your greatness; you ought to do the rest. God is not willing to do everything, and thus take away our free will and that share of glory which belongs to us.”