

THE EVERYMAN
LIBRARY

The Everyman Library was founded by J. M. Dent in 1906. He chose the name Everyman because he wanted to make available the best books ever written in every field to the greatest number of people at the cheapest possible price. He began with Boswell's 'Life of Johnson'; his one-thousandth title was Aristotle's 'Metaphysics', by which time sales exceeded forty million.

Today Everyman paperbacks remain true to J. M. Dent's aims and high standards, with a wide range of titles at affordable prices in editions which address the needs of today's readers. Each new text is reset to give a clear, elegant page and to incorporate the latest thinking and scholarship. Each book carries the pilgrim logo, the character in 'Everyman', a medieval mystery play, a proud link between Everyman past and present.

Niccolò Machiavelli
**THE PRINCE
AND OTHER POLITICAL
WRITINGS**

Translated and edited by
STEPHEN J. MILNER

University of Bristol

Consultant Editor for this volume
ROBIN KIRKPATRICK
Robinson College, Cambridge



EVERYMAN
J. M. DENT • LONDON
CHARLES E. TUTTLE
VERMONT

Introduction, notes and other critical apparatus

© J M Dent 1995

First published in Everyman in 1908

This edition first published in 1995

All rights reserved

J. M. Dent

Orion Publishing Group

Orion House, 5 Upper St Martin's Lane,

London WC2H 9EA

and

Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc.

28 South Main Street,

Rutland, Vermont 05701, USA

Typeset in Sabon by CentraCet Ltd

Printed in Great Britain by

The Guernsey Press Co. Ltd, Guernsey, C. I.

This book if bound as a paperback is subject to the condition that it may not be issued on loan or otherwise except in its original binding.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
is available upon request.

ISBN 0 460 87629 5

CONTENTS

Note on the Author and Translator and Editor vii

Chronology of the Life and Times of Machiavelli viii

Introduction xiii

Notes on the Texts xxv

LETTER OF FRANCESCO VETTORI TO
NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI 3

LETTER OF NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI TO
FRANCESCO VETTORI 8

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PEOPLE OF THE
VALDICHIANA WHO HAVE REBELLED 14

A PORTRAIT OF GERMAN AFFAIRS 20

DUKE VALENTINO'S TREACHEROUS BETRAYAL
OF VITELLOZZO VITELLI, OLIVEROTTO DA FERMO
AND OTHERS 28

THE PRINCE 36

Glossary of Words and Terms 129

Machiavelli and his Critics 132

Suggestions for Further Reading 146

Acknowledgements 148

when he was in the countryside with his friends he would stop and discuss with them: 'If the enemy were on that hill, which of us would hold the advantage? How could you march to engage with them without breaking ranks? If we wanted to retreat, how should we do it? If they were to retreat, how should we pursue them?' and, as they went along, he put forward to them all the possible scenarios that could confront an army. He would heed their views, and give his own, backing them up with reasons, so that through this continual cogitation nothing could unexpectedly arise while he was leading his armies for which he did not have a remedy.

As regards the training of the mind, the prince should read histories, and observe the actions of outstanding men contained in them, noting how they acted in times of war, examining the reasons for their victories and defeats in order to be able to imitate the former and avoid the latter. Above all, he should do what certain outstanding men did in the past, in taking someone who has been praised and glorified before them as a model for imitation, always keeping their actions and deeds close at hand. It is said that Alexander the Great did this in imitating Achilles; Caesar, Alexander; and Scipio, Cyrus. And whoever reads the life of Cyrus written by Xenophon, will then realise the extent to which that imitation resulted in Scipio's own glory during his lifetime, and how much Scipio's chastity, affability, humanity and liberality conformed with those self-same qualities in Cyrus as described by Xenophon.

A wise prince should follow these kinds of practice, never remaining idle in times of peace but seeking rather to profit from such peace assiduously, in order to be able to make use of it in times of adversity, so that when fortune changes her mind, he finds himself prepared to withstand her.

CHAPTER 15

On the Things for which Men, and especially
Princes, are Praised or Blamed
(*De his rebus quibus homines et praesertim
principes laudantur aut vituperantur*)

It now remains to consider the procedures and policies a prince should adopt in relation to both his subjects and allies. And since I am aware that many have written on this theme, I am afraid that, in also writing about it myself, I may be considered presumptuous, especially as I depart from the methods adopted by others when discussing this subject. But since my intention is to write something useful for the understanding reader, it seems to me more beneficial to go behind to the effectual truth of the matter, rather than focusing on the imagining of it. For many writers have depicted their own republics and principalities which have never been seen or known actually to exist. And since the distance between how one lives and how one should live is so great, he who discards what he does for what he should do, usually learns how to ruin rather than maintain himself. For a man who wants to make a career of doing good in all spheres will be ruined amongst so many who are not good. Therefore, it is necessary for a prince, if he wants to maintain his position, to develop the ability to be not good, and use or not use this ability as necessity dictates.

Leaving aside the imagined aspects of a prince, therefore, and discussing those that are real, I maintain that all men, when they are talked about, and especially princes, since they are more exposed, are remarked upon for various qualities which bring them either praise or blame. For some are considered generous, others miserly (to use a Tuscan term, since avaricious, in our tongue, still refers to someone who desires to possess something by force, whilst we call somebody who refrains from using his own things miserly). Some are considered benefactors, others greedy; some cruel, others merciful; some faithless, others trustworthy; some effeminate and weak, others fierce and bold; some

humane, others proud; some lascivious, others chaste; some upright, others cunning; some severe, others easy-going; some serious, others light-hearted; some religious, others sceptical and so on. I realise that everyone will admit that it would be most laudable to find all the good qualities mentioned above combined in a prince. But since it is not possible either to possess or wholly to observe them, because human nature does not allow it, it is necessary for him to be sufficiently prudent that he knows how to avoid the infamy of those vices that will deprive him of his state, and, if at all possible, be wary of those that are less threatening. If this is impossible, however, he should not worry unduly about the latter. Moreover, he should not worry about the infamy incurred by those vices which are indispensable in maintaining his state, because if he examines everything carefully, he will find that something which seems virtue [*virtù*] can, if put into practice, cause his ruin, while another thing which seems a vice can, when put into practice, result in his security and well-being.

CHAPTER 16

On Generosity and Meanness (*De liberalitate et parsimonia*)

Let me begin, therefore, with the first of the qualities mentioned above. I maintain that it would be good to be considered generous. Nevertheless, generosity, when used in such a way as to gain you that reputation, will damage you. Because if it is used virtuously and as it should be used, it is not recognised, and you will not avoid the infamy of its opposite. Therefore, if you want to establish a name for yourself as a generous person, you cannot afford to neglect any kind of lavishness. A prince who acts this way will soon use up all his resources and will eventually, if he wishes to maintain a name for being generous, be constrained to impose extra taxes in addition to the normal levies, and be rigorous and do all he can to acquire money. This will begin to make him odious to the people, and little esteemed

on account of his poverty. Consequently, having harmed the majority and rewarded few with his generosity, he will feel the effect of difficulties immediately and be endangered by the first threats that arise. When he realises this and seeks to exercise restraint, he will instantly acquire the reputation of a miser.

Therefore, as a prince cannot employ and gain a reputation for this virtue [*virtù*] of generosity without damaging his position, he should not mind, if he is a prudent man, being called a miser. With the passage of time he will be considered increasingly generous, and given that his income from taxes will be sufficient for him, due to his parsimony, he will be able to defend himself against those who declare war on him, and to launch campaigns without burdening the people with taxes. Consequently, he displays generosity to all those from whom he takes nothing, who are countless in number, and miserliness to all those to whom he gives nothing, who are few. In our own times we have seen great things achieved only by those who have been held miserly. The others have been wiped out. Pope Julius II, who used his reputation for generosity to accede to the Papacy, did not consider keeping it up later, since he wanted to be capable of fighting wars. The current King of France has waged many wars without levying any additional taxes on his subjects, solely because his enduring parsimony has underwritten the extra expenditure. The current King of Spain would not have launched, or won, so many expeditions if he had been reputed generous.

A prince, therefore, should give little thought to being considered miserly if it means not robbing his subjects, being able to defend himself, not becoming impoverished and contemptible, and not being forced to become rapacious. For this is one of those vices which enables him to rule. If anyone should say, 'Caesar rose to power through generosity, and many others have reached the highest positions because they were considered, and were, generous', I would reply, 'You are either a prince already, or you are in the process of becoming a prince. In the first instance this kind of generosity is harmful, in the second it is

necessary to be considered generous. Caesar was one of those who wanted to become ruler of Rome, but if, having arrived at that position, he had survived and not tempered his spending, he would have destroyed that power.' And if anyone should answer, 'There have been many princes who have achieved great things with their armies and been held generous', I would reply, 'The prince either spends what is his own and his subjects', or what belongs to others. In the first instance he should be thrifty, in the second unsparing in his generosity. The prince who accompanies his armies, and who lives off plunder, pillage and ransoms, uses what belongs to others. It is necessary for him to be generous, otherwise he would not be followed by his troops. For he can be a more munificent benefactor when handling what does not belong to himself or his subjects, as Cyrus, Caesar and Alexander were. Because disposing of what belongs to others does not diminish your standing but adds to it. Dispensing with what belongs to yourself is the only thing which will harm you, for there is nothing more self-destructive than generosity, because as you practise it you lose the ability to practise it, and become either impoverished and contemptible or, in order to avoid poverty, rapacious and odious. Being thought contemptible and odious are amongst the things a prince should guard against, and generosity can lead to both the one and the other.' It is wiser, therefore, to be reputed miserly, which breeds infamy but not hatred, than, in seeking to be held generous, being forced to gain a reputation for rapacity, which breeds infamy combined with hate.

CHAPTER 17

On Cruelty and Mercy; and Whether it is Better
to be Loved than Feared, or the Reverse
(*De crudelitate et pietate; et an sit melius
amari quam timeri, vel e contra*)

Passing down the list of the aforementioned qualities, I maintain that each prince should desire to be thought merciful and not

cruel. Nonetheless, he should be careful not to misuse this mercy. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel, nevertheless his cruelty put the Romagna in order, uniting it and reducing it to peace and loyalty. If one examines this carefully, you will see that he was far more merciful than the Florentine people, who, rather than be thought cruel, let Pistoia destroy itself.⁴⁸ A prince, therefore, should pay no heed to the infamy of being considered cruel if it means he keeps his subjects united and loyal. For he will be more merciful by making an example of one or two people than those who allow disorders to continue, resulting in murders and theft due to misjudged mercy. For these disorders usually harm the whole community, whilst the executions a prince orders harm only a single person. The new prince, above all other princes, cannot avoid a reputation for cruelty, since new states are full of dangers. Virgil says in the following words of Dido,

difficult circumstances and the newness of my kingdom constrain me to undertake these things, and defend my frontiers everywhere with guards.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, he should be circumspect in believing and acting, and not be afraid of his own shadow, proceeding in a manner tempered by prudence and humanity, so that over-confidence does not make him hasty, or excessive mistrust render him intolerable.

This gives rise to an argument: whether it is better to be loved than feared, or the opposite. The answer is that one would like to be both, but since it is difficult to combine the two it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one of the two has to make way. For generally speaking, one can say the following about men: they are ungrateful, inconstant, feigners and dissimulators, avoiders of dangers, eager for gain, and whilst it profits them

⁴⁸ Pistoia's long-standing factions, the Cancellieri and the Panciatichi, resumed virtual civil war after the exile of the Medici from Florence in 1494. Machiavelli made at least three visits to the town in an attempt to quell the factions and enforce the *Capitoli*, peace treaties instituted by the Florentine commissioners. In March 1502 he wrote a brief tract entitled *De rebus pistoriensibus*.

⁴⁹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 563-4.

they are all yours. They will offer you their blood, their property, their life and their offspring when your need for them is remote, as mentioned above. But when your needs are pressing, they turn away. The prince who depends entirely on their words perishes when he finds he has not taken any other precautions. This is because the friendships that are purchased with money and not by greatness and nobility of spirit are paid for, but not collected, and when you need them they cannot be used. Men are less worried about harming somebody who makes himself loved than someone who makes himself feared, for love is held by a chain of obligation which, since men are bad, is broken at every opportunity for personal gain. Fear, on the other hand, is maintained by a dread of punishment which will never desert you.

Nonetheless, the prince should make himself feared in such a way that, even if he is not loved, he avoids being hated, since being feared and not hated can easily go together. This will always happen if he abstains from the property of his subjects and citizens, and from their womenfolk. If he should need to take anyone's life, he should do it when there is a suitable justification and a demonstrable cause. But above all, he should abstain from other's property, since men forget their father's death more quickly than the loss of their patrimony. Moreover, there is never a shortage of reasons for taking property, and the prince who begins to live by robbery finds reasons to sequester what belongs to others. With executions it is the opposite, reasons are more exceptional and less numerous.

But when the prince is with his armies and in charge of a large number of soldiers, then it is very necessary that he does not worry about a reputation for cruelty. Amongst Hannibal's admirable actions is the following: that having led an incredibly large army, made up of countless different races, on campaigns in foreign lands, no dissension ever arose either among the troops themselves or against their leader, irrespective of whether they enjoyed good or bad fortune. This came about for no other reason than his inhuman cruelty, which, together with his other infinite abilities [*virtù*], made him respected and feared in the

eyes of his soldiers. Without it, and the effect it had, his other abilities [*virtù*] would not have been enough. The historians, paying scant attention to the matter, on the one hand admire his achievement whilst simultaneously condemning its main cause.

The truth of the assertion that his other abilities [*virtù*] would not have been enough, is seen in the case of Scipio, a man not only exceptional in his own time but also in the annals of all that is known, for his armies rebelled against him in Spain. This happened solely on account of his excessive mercy, which granted more licence to his soldiers than is fitting for military discipline. He was reproached for this in the Senate by Fabius Maximus, who called him the corrupter of the Roman legions. Scipio failed to ensure that the people of Locri were avenged after they had been plundered by one of his legates, nor was the legate in question punished for his insubordination. All this happened due to his accommodating nature. So much so that when some sought to excuse him before the Senate, they noted that many men knew better how not to err than how to punish those who erred. Scipio's nature would, in time, have ruined his fame and glory if he had continued acting this way during his rule. But when he lived under the rule of the Senate, this harmful quality of his remained not only hidden, but even brought him glory.⁵⁰

Returning, therefore, to the subject of being feared or loved, I conclude that since men are loving when it suits them and fearful when it suits the prince, a wise prince should base himself on what is his, not on what belongs to others. He should merely seek, as I said, to avoid hatred.

⁵⁰ Scipio Africanus the elder (c. 236–183 BC) was the leader of the Roman armies in Spain, who drove out the Carthaginians and then launched a campaign in northern Africa, defeating Hannibal and capturing Carthage in 201 BC. The Locri episode is taken from Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, XXIX, 8–21. See also Chapter 14.

CHAPTER 18

Whether Princes Should Keep Their Word
(*Quomodo fides a principibus sit servanda*)

Everyone understands how laudable it is for a prince to keep his word and live with integrity and not cunning. Nonetheless, experience shows that nowadays those princes who have accomplished great things have had little respect for keeping their word and have known how to confuse men's minds with cunning. In the end they have overcome those who have preferred honesty.

You must understand, therefore, that there are two ways of fighting: the first using laws, the second force. The first belongs to man, the second to animals.⁵¹ But since the first is often not enough, one must have recourse to the second. It is therefore necessary for a prince to know how to make good use of the animal and the human. This precept was taught to princes by the ancients under the cover of allegory. They wrote how Achilles and many more of those ancient princes were entrusted to Chiron the centaur for their upbringing, so that they could be looked after under his tutelage.⁵² Having a half-man, half-beast as a teacher simply means that a prince needs to know how to use both natures, for the one without the other does not last.

As it is necessary for a prince to know how to use the animal, therefore, he should choose the fox and the lion from amongst their ranks, since the lion cannot defend itself from traps and the fox cannot defend itself from the wolves. One needs to be a fox, therefore, to recognise traps, and a lion to frighten the wolves. Those who rely simply on the lion do not understand this. A prudent ruler, therefore, cannot, and should not, keep

⁵¹ Machiavelli here touches on a widespread behavioural analogy. This particular passage refers to Cicero, *On Duties*, I, xiii. Other commentators have also pointed to Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, Inferno, XXVII, 74–5. Machiavelli was also aware of the lion and the wolf story in Aesop's *Fables*, 42, as witnessed in Vettori's letter to him of 23 November 1513. See p. 3.

⁵² The other rulers referred to are Hercules, Jason, Asclepius and Theseus.

his word when keeping it is to his disadvantage, and when the reasons that made him promise no longer exist. For if all men were good, this precept would not hold good, but since they are bad and would not keep their word to you, you do not have to keep yours to them. Nor is there ever a shortage of legitimate reasons to disguise your disregard. Countless current examples could be cited of this, showing how many peaces, how many promises have been rendered null and void through the untrustworthiness of princes. The one who has known how best to use the fox has come off best. But it is necessary to know how to disguise this nature well and be a great feigner and dissimulator. Men are so simple and so obedient to present needs, that he who deceives will always find people who will let themselves be deceived.

Of the recent examples, I would like to mention one in particular. Alexander VI never did anything, nor thought of anything, apart from deceiving men, and he always found a subject who would enable him to do it. Never was there a man more effective in swearing, who affirmed things with such heavy oaths, and yet stuck to them less. Nonetheless, his deceptions always worked out as he hoped, because he well understood this aspect of life.

It is unnecessary, therefore, for a prince actually to have all the qualities mentioned above, but it is more than necessary to seem to have them. Indeed, I will hazard to say this: that when you have them and when you always keep to them they are harmful, but when you seem to have them they are useful, like seeming merciful, loyal, humane, upright and religious, and being so. But you must remain mentally prepared, so that when it is necessary not to have these qualities you are able, and know how to assume their opposites. It is essential to realise this: that a prince, and above all a new prince, cannot practise all those things which gain men a reputation for being good, as it is often necessary, in order to keep hold of the state, to act contrary to trust, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion. It is for that reason that he needs a mind prepared to vary as the winds of fortune and free flow of events dictate, and,

as stated above, he should not deviate from good if possible, but know how to act badly when necessary.

A prince should take great care, therefore, that nothing issues from his mouth which is not imbued with the five aforementioned qualities. To see him and hear him, he should seem all-merciful, all-trustworthy, all-integrity, all-humanity, all-religion. Nothing is more important to seem to have than this last quality. Generally speaking, men judge more by the eyes than by the hands, because everybody can see, but only a few can feel. Everyone sees what you seem, few feel what you are like. Those few do not dare stand against the opinion of the many who have the majesty of the state defending them. In the actions of all men, and most of all in princes, where there is no appeal to higher judgement, one looks to the result. A prince should seek to win and keep hold of a state. The means will always be judged honourable and praised by everybody, for the common people are always impressed by how things seem and by the way things turn out, and in the world there is nothing except common people. When the many are comfortably settled, the few will find no way in. A certain current prince, who had better remain anonymous, preaches nothing but peace and trust, and is an implacable enemy of both. If he had observed either of these qualities, he would have lost either his reputation or his state on several occasions.

CHAPTER 19

On the Avoidance of Contempt and Hatred (*De contemptu et odio fugiendo*)

Since the qualities discussed above were only the most important ones, I would like briefly to consider the others under this general heading: that the prince, as hinted at above, should seek to avoid those things that render him odious and contemptible. Whenever he avoids them, he will have fulfilled his job and will find that his other evil actions pose no threat to him at all. As I have said, he will be hated above all if he is rapacious and seizes

his subjects' property and women. He should refrain from doing this. The majority of men live happily so long as they are not deprived of either their property or their honour. The prince has only to contend with the ambition of a few which can be easily restrained in a variety of ways. He will be held in contempt if he is considered capricious, superficial, effeminate, cowardly and irresolute. A prince should avoid these things like the plague, and seek to show greatness, courage, gravity and strength in his actions, ensuring that his decisions in his subjects' private affairs are irrevocable and that he maintains such standing that nobody thinks to deceive or outwit him.

The prince who earns this reputation for himself is held in high esteem, and as long as he is understood to be a great man and revered by his subjects, it is difficult to conspire against and attack such a person when they are esteemed. For a prince should have two fears: an internal one, in regard to his subjects, and an external one, in regard to foreign powers. He defends himself against the latter with good arms and good allies, and when he has good arms he will always have good allies. Internal affairs will always remain stable whilst external matters are stable, unless they have already been disturbed by a conspiracy. And even when external circumstances change, if the prince has organised and conducted himself as I have said, and if he does not capitulate, he will always withstand any assault, as did Nabis the Spartan (as I mentioned). As regards his subjects, however, when external circumstances are stable he should be fearful lest they conspire against him. The prince can secure himself against this quite well, by avoiding being hated or despised and ensuring the people are content with him. It is vital to do this, as was made clear at length above. One of the most potent remedies a prince can have against conspiracies is not being hated by the population as a whole, because conspirators always hope to satisfy the people with the death of the prince. When they think they might offend the people, they are not courageous enough to begin such an enterprise, because the difficulties conspirators face are endless. Experience shows that there have been many conspiracies, but that precious few have