

one merciful;¹ the one a breaker of faith, the other faithful; the one effeminate and pusillanimous, the other fierce and spirited; the one humane, the other proud; the one lascivious, the other chaste; the one honest, the other astute; the one hard, the other agreeable;² the one grave, the other light; the one religious, the other unbelieving, and the like. And I know that everyone will confess that it would be a very praiseworthy thing to find

mentioned qualities that are held good. But because he cannot have them, nor wholly³ observe them, since human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for him to be so prudent as to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices that would take his state from him and to be on guard against those that do not, if that is possible; but if one cannot, one can let them go on with less hesitation. And furthermore one should not care about incurring the fame⁴ of those vices without which it is difficult to save one's state; for if one considers everything well, one will find to be virtue, which if pursued would be one's ruin, and something else appears to be vice, which if pursued results in one's security and well-being.

1. *pietoso* has a connotation of "pious."

2. lit.: easy.

3. Or honestly.

4. Some manuscripts have *infamia*, "infamy."

❧XVI❧

Of Liberality and Parsimony

Beginning, then, with the first of the above-mentioned qualities, I say that it would be good to be held liberal; nonetheless, liberality, when used so that you may be held

liberal, hurts¹ you. For if it is used virtuously and as it should be used, it may not be recognized, and you will not escape the infamy of its contrary. And so, if one wants to maintain a name for liberality among men, it is necessary not to leave out any kind of lavish display, so that a prince who has done this will always consume all his resources in such deeds. In the end it will be necessary, if he wants to maintain a name for liberality, to burden the people extraordinarily, to be rigorous with taxes, and to do all those things that can be done to get money. This will begin to make him hated by his subjects, and little esteemed by anyone as he becomes poor; so having offended the many and rewarded the few with this liberality of his, he feels every least hardship and runs into risk at every slight danger. When he recognizes this, and wants to draw back from it, he immediately incurs the infamy of meanness.

Thus, since a prince cannot, without damage to himself, use the virtue of liberality so that it is recognized, he should not, if he is prudent, care about a name for meanness. For with time he will always be held more and more liberal when it is seen that with his parsimony his income is enough for him, that he can defend himself from whoever makes war on him, and that he can undertake campaigns without burdening the people. So he comes to use liberality with all those from whom he does not take, who are infinite, and meanness with all those to whom he does not give, who are few. In our times we have not seen great things done except by those who have been considered mean; the others have been eliminated. Pope Julius II, while he made use of a name for liberality to attain the papacy, did not think of maintaining it later, so as to be able to make war. The present king of France² has carried on many wars without imposing an extraordinary tax on his subjects, only because

1. lit.: offends.

2. Louis XII.

the extra expenses were administered with his long-practiced parsimony. If the present king of Spain³ had been held liberal, he would not have been able to make or win so many campaigns.

Therefore, so as not to have to rob his subjects, to be able to defend himself, not to become poor and contemptible, nor to be forced to become rapacious, a prince should esteem it little to incur a name for meanness, because this is one of those vices which enable him to rule. And if someone should say: Caesar attained empire with liberality, and many others, because they have been and have been held to be liberal, have attained very great rank, I respond: either you are already a prince or you are on the path to acquiring it: in the first case this liberality is damaging; in the second it is indeed necessary to be held liberal. And Caesar was one of those who wanted to attain the principate of Rome; but if after he had arrived there, had he remained alive and not been temperate with his expenses, he would have destroyed that empire. And if someone should reply: many have been princes and have done great things with their armies who have been held very liberal, I respond to you: either the prince spends from what is his own and his subjects' or from what belongs to someone else. In the first case he should be sparing; in the other, he should not leave out any part of liberality. And for the prince who goes out with his armies, who feeds on booty, pillage, and ransom and manages on what belongs to someone else, this liberality is necessary; otherwise he would not be followed by his soldiers. And of what is not yours or your subjects' one can be a bigger giver, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander, because spending what is someone else's does not take reputation from you but adds it to you; only spending your own is what harms you. And there is nothing that consumes itself as much as liberality: while you use it, you lose the capacity to

3. Ferdinand the Catholic.

use it; and you become either poor and contemptible or, to escape poverty, rapacious and hateful. Among all the things that a prince should guard against is being contemptible and hated, and liberality leads you to both. So there is more wisdom in maintaining a name for meanness, which begets infamy without hatred, than in being under a necessity, because one wants to have a name for liberality, to incur a name for rapacity, which begets infamy with hatred.

❧XVII❧

Of Cruelty and Mercy,¹ and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved Than Feared, or the Contrary

Descending next to the other qualities cited before, I say that each prince should desire to be held merciful and not cruel; nonetheless he should take care not to use this mercy badly. Cesare Borgia was held to be cruel; nonetheless his cruelty restored the Romagna, united it, and reduced it to peace and to faith. If one considers this well, one will see that he was much more merciful than the Florentine people, who so as to escape a name for cruelty, allowed Pistoia to be destroyed.² A prince, therefore, so as to keep his subjects united and faithful, should not care about the infamy of cruelty, because with very few examples he will be more merciful than those who for the sake of too much mercy allow disorders to continue, from which come killings or

1. Or piety, throughout *The Prince*.

2. From 1500 to 1502 Pistoia, a city subject to Florence, was torn by factional disputes and riots. NM was there as representative of the Florentines on several occasions in 1501.

robberies; for these customarily hurt³ a whole community,⁴ but the executions that come from the prince hurt⁵ one particular person. And of all princes, it is impossible for the new prince to escape a name for cruelty because new states are full of dangers. And Virgil says in the mouth of Dido: "The harshness of things and the newness of the kingdom compel me to contrive such things, and to keep a broad watch over the borders."⁶

Nonetheless, he should be slow to believe and to move, nor should he make himself feared, and he should proceed in a temperate mode with prudence and humanity so that too much confiden and too much diffidence does not render him intolerable.

From this a dispute arises whether it is better to be loved than feared, or the reverse. The response is that one would want to be both the one and the other; but because it is difficult to put them together, it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one has to lack one of the two. For one can say this generally of men: that they are ungrateful, fi pretenders and dissemblers, evaders of danger, eager for gain. While you do them good, they are yours, offering you their blood, property, lives, and children, as I said above,⁷ when the need for them is far away; but, when it is close to you, they revolt. And that prince who has founded himself entirely on their words, stripped of other preparation, is ruined; for friendships that are acquired at a price and not with greatness and nobility of spirit are bought, but they are not owned and when the time comes they cannot be spent. And men have less hesitation to offend one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are

3. lit.: offend.

4. lit.: a whole universality.

5. lit.: offend.

6. Virgil, *Aeneid* I 563-64.

7. See Chapter 9.

wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by a dread of punishment that never forsakes you.

The prince should nonetheless make himself feared in such a mode that if he does not acquire love, he escapes hatred, because being feared and not being hated can go together very well. This he will always do if he abstains from the property of his citizens and his subjects, and from their women; and if he also needs to proceed against someone's life,⁸ he must do it when there is suitable justification and manifest cause for it. But above all, he must abstain from the property of others, because men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of a patrimony. Furthermore, causes for taking away property are never lacking, and he who begins to live by rapine always finds cause to seize others' property; and, on the contrary, causes for taking life⁹ are rarer and disappear more quickly.

But when the prince is with his armies and has a multitude of soldiers under his government, then it is above all necessary not to care about a name for cruelty, because without this name he never holds his army united, or disposed to any action. Among the admirable actions of Hannibal is numbered this one: that when he had a very large army, mixed with infinite kinds of men, and had led it to fight in alien lands, no dissension ever arose in it, neither among themselves nor against the prince, in bad as well as in his good fortune. This could not have arisen from anything other than his inhuman cruelty which, together with his infinite virtues, always made him venerable and terrible in the sight of his soldiers; and without it, his other virtues would not have sufficed to bring about this effect. And the writers, having considered little in this, on the one hand admire this action of his but on the other condemn the principal cause of it.

8. lit.: blood.

9. lit.: blood.

And to see that it is true that his other virtues would not have been enough, one can consider Scipio, who was very rare not only in his times but also in the entire memory of things known—whose armies in Spain rebelled against him. This arose from nothing but his excessive mercy, which had allowed his soldiers more license than is fitting for military discipline. Scipio's mercy was reprov'd in the Senate by Fabius Maximus, who called him the corruptor of the Roman military. After the Locrians had been destroyed by a legate of Scipio's, they were not avenged by him, nor was the insolence of that legate corrected—all of which arose from his agreeable nature, so that when someone in the Senate wanted to excuse him, he said that there were many men who knew better how not to err than how to correct errors. Such a nature would in time have sullied Scipio's fame and glory if he had continued with it in the empire; but while he lived under the government of the Senate, this damaging quality of his not only was hidden, but made for his glory.¹⁰

I conclude, then, returning to being feared and loved, that since men love at their convenience and fear at the convenience of the prince, a wise prince should find himself on what is his, not on what is someone else's; he should only contrive to avoid hatred, as was said.

10. On the comparison between Hannibal and Scipio, see also *Discourses on Livy* III 19–21. NM's source is in Livy, XXIX 19, 21.

❧XVIII❧

In What Mode Faith Should Be Kept by Princes

How praiseworthy it is for a prince to keep his faith, and to live with honesty and not by astuteness, everyone under-

stands. Nonetheless one sees by experience in our times that the princes who have done great things are those who have taken little account of faith and have known how to get around men's brains with their astuteness; and in the end they have overcome those who have founded themselves on loyalty.

Thus, you¹ must know that there are two kinds of combat: one with laws, the other with force. The first proper to man, the second to beasts; but because the first is often not enough, one must have recourse to the second. Therefore it is necessary for a prince to know well how to use the beast and the man. This role was taught covertly to princes by ancient writers, who wrote that Achilles, and many other ancient princes, were given to Chiron the centaur to be raised, so that he would look after them with his discipline. To have as teacher a half-beast, half-man means nothing other than that a prince needs to know how to use both natures; and the one without the other is not lasting.

Thus, since a prince is compelled of necessity to know well how to use the beast, he should pick the fox and the lion,² because the lion does not defend itself from snares and the fox does not defend itself from wolves. So one needs to be a fox to recognize snares and a lion to frighten the wolves. Those who stay simply with the lion do not understand this. A prudent lord, therefore, cannot observe faith, nor should he, when such observance turns against him, and the causes that made him promise have been eliminated. And if all men were good, this teaching would not be good; but because they are wicked and do not observe faith with you, you also do not have to observe it with them. Nor does a prince ever lack legitimate causes to color his failure to observe faith. One could give infinite modern examples of this, and show how many peace treaties and promises have been rendered invalid and

1. The formal or plural you.

2. A possible source for this: Cicero, *De Officiis* I.11.34; 13.41.

vain through the infidelity of princes; and the one who has known best how to use the fox has come out best. But it is necessary to know well how to color this nature, and to be a great pretender and dissembler; and men are so simple and so obedient to present necessities that he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived.

I do not want to be silent about one of the recent examples. Alexander VI never did anything, nor ever thought of anything, but how to deceive men, and he always found a subject to whom he could do it. And there never was a man with greater efficacy in affirming it with greater oaths, who observed it less; nonetheless, his deceits succeeded at his will, because he well knew this aspect of the world.

Thus, it is not necessary for a prince to have all the above-mentioned qualities in fact, but it is indeed necessary to appear to have them. Nay, I dare say this, that by having them and always observing them, they are harmful; and by appearing to have them, they are useful, as it is to appear merciful, faithful, humane, honest, and religious, and to be so; but to remain with a spirit built so that, if you need not to be those things, you are able and know how to change to the contrary. This has to be understood: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things for which men are held good, since he is often under a necessity, to maintain his state, of acting against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion. And so he needs to have a spirit disposed to change as the winds of fortune and variations of things command him, and as I said above, not depart from good, when possible, but know how to enter into evil, when forced by necessity.

A prince should thus take great care that nothing escape his mouth that is not full of the above-mentioned five qualities and that, to see him and hear him, he should appear all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion. And nothing is more necessary to appear to have than this

last quality. Men in general³ judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given⁴ to everyone, touching to few. Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are; and these few dare not oppose the opinion of many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them; and in the actions of all men, and especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end. So let a prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honorable, and will be praised by everyone. For the vulgar are taken in by the appearance and the outcome of a thing, and in the world there is no one but the vulgar; the few have a place there⁵ when the many have somewhere to lean on. A certain prince of present times, whom it is not well to name,⁶ never preaches anything but peace and faith, and is very hostile to both. If he had observed both, he would have had either his reputation or his state taken from him many times.

3. lit.: universally.

4. lit.: touches.

5. One manuscript says "the few have no place there . . ."; and the authorities have divided, Casella, Russo, and Sasso accepting "no place," Chabod and Bertelli "a place."

6. Apparently Ferdinand the Catholic, whom NM unhesitatingly names in Chapter 21.

❧XIX❧

Of Avoiding Contempt and Hatred

But because I have spoken of the most important of the qualities mentioned above, I want to discourse on the others briefly under this generality, that the prince, as was said above in part, should think how to avoid those things that

Why the Princes of Italy Have Lost Their States

When the things written above have been observed prudently, they make a new prince appear ancient and immediately render him more secure and steady in his state than if he had grown old in it. For a new prince is observed much more in his actions than a hereditary one; and when they are recognized as virtuous, they take hold of men much more and obligate them much more than ancient blood. For men are much more taken by present things than by past ones, and when they find good in the present, they enjoy it and do not seek elsewhere; indeed they will take up every defense on behalf of a new prince if he is not lacking in other things as regards himself. And so he will have the double glory of having made the beginning of a new principality, of having adorned it and consolidated it with good laws, good arms, good friends,¹ and good examples, just as he has a double shame who, having been born prince, has lost it through his lack of prudence.

And if one considers those lords in Italy who have lost their states in our times, like the king of Naples,² the duke of Milan,³ and others, one will find in them, first, a common defect as to arms, the causes of which have been discussed at length above; then, one will see that some of them either had a hostile people or if they had friendly peoples, did not know how to secure themselves against the great. For without these defects, states that have enough nerve to put an

1. Most MSS omit "good friends."

2. Frederick of Aragon, expelled from Naples in 1501 by Ferdinand the Catholic and Louis XII, and dethroned.

3. Ludovico Sforza; see Chapter 3.

army into the field are not lost. Philip of Macedon, not the father of Alexander but the one who was defeated by Titus Quintius,⁴ did not have much of a state with respect to the greatness of the Romans and of Greece, who attacked him; nonetheless, because he was a military man and knew how to deal with the people and secure himself against the great, he kept up a war against them for many years; and if at the end he lost dominion over several cities, his kingdom remained to him nonetheless.

Therefore, these princes of ours who have been in their principalities for many years may not accuse fortune when they have lost them afterwards, but their own indolence; for, never having thought that quiet times could change (which is a common defect of men, not to take account of the storm during the calm), when later the times became adverse, they thought of fleeing and not of defending themselves. And they hoped that their peoples, disgusted with the insolence of the victors, would call them back. This course is good when others are lacking; but it is indeed bad to have put aside other remedies for this one. For one should never fall in the belief you can find someone to pick you up. Whether it does not happen or happens, it is not security for you, because that defense was base and did not depend on you. And those defenses alone are good, are certain, and are lasting, that depend on you yourself and on your virtue.

4. On Philip V of Macedonia (237–179 B.C.), see *Discourses on Livy* II 4, 10; III 10, 37.

How Much Fortune Can Do in Human Affairs, and in What Mode It May Be Opposed

It is not unknown to me that many have held and hold the opinion that worldly things are so governed by fortune and by God, that men cannot correct them with their prudence, indeed that they have no remedy at all; and on account of this they might judge that one need not sweat much over things but let oneself be governed by chance. This opinion has been believed more in our times because of the great variability of things which have been seen and are seen every day, beyond every human conjecture. When I have thought about this sometimes, I have been in some part inclined to their opinion. Nonetheless, so that our free will not be eliminated, I judge that it might be true that fortune is arbiter of half of our actions, but also that she leaves the other half, or close to it, for us to govern. And I liken her to one of these violent rivers which, when they become enraged, flood the plains, ruin the trees and the buildings, lift earth from this part, drop in another; each person flees before them, everyone yields to their impetus without being able to hinder them in any regard. And although they are like this, it is not as if men, when times are quiet, could not provide for them with dikes and dams so that when they rise later, either they go by a canal or their impetus is neither so wanton nor so damaging. It happens similarly with fortune, which demonstrates her power where virtue has not been put in order¹ to resist her and therefore turns her impetus where she knows that dams and dikes

1. lit.: ordered.

have not been made to contain her. And if you consider Italy, which is the seat of these variations and that which has given them motion, you will see² a country without dams and without any dike. If it had been diked by suitable virtue, like Germany, Spain, and France, either this flood would not have brought the great variations that it has, or it would not have come here.

And I wish that this may be enough to have said about opposing fortune in general.³ But restricting myself more to particulars, I say that one sees a given prince be happy today and come to ruin tomorrow without having seen him change his nature or any quality. This I believe arises, first, from the causes that have been discussed at length in the preceding, that is, that the prince who leans entirely on his fortune comes to ruin as it varies. I believe, further, that he is happy who adapts his mode of proceeding to the qualities of the times; and similarly, he is unhappy whose procedure is in disaccord with the times. For one sees that in the things that lead men to the end that each has before him, that is, glories and riches, they proceed variously: one with caution,⁴ the other with impetuosity; one by violence, the other with art; one with patience, the other with its contrary—and with these different modes each can attain it. One also sees two cautious persons, one attaining his plan, the other not; and similarly two persons are equally happy with two different methods, one being cautious, the other impetuous. This arises from nothing other than from the quality of the times that they conform to or not in their procedure. From this follows what I said, that two persons working differently come out with the same effect; and of two persons working identically, one is led to his end, the

2. Both *you's* in this sentence are the formal or plural *you*.

3. lit.: universal.

4. lit.: respect; *rispetto* is translated usually as "caution" and "hesitation," occasionally as "regard."

other not. On this also depends the variability of the good: for if one governs himself with caution and patience, and the times and affairs turn in such a way that his government is good, he comes out happy; but if the times and affairs change, he is ruined because he does not change his mode of proceeding. Nor may a man be found so prudent as to know how to accommodate himself to this, whether because he cannot deviate from what nature inclines him to or also because, when one has always flourished by walking on one path, he cannot be persuaded to depart from it. And so the cautious man, when it is time to come to impetuosity, does not know how to do it, hence comes to ruin: for if he would change his nature with the times and with affairs, his fortune would not change.

Pope Julius II proceeded impetuously in all his affairs, and he found the times and affairs so much in conformity with his mode of proceeding that he always achieved a happy end. Consider⁵ the first enterprise that he undertook in Bologna, while Messer Giovanni Bentivoglio was still living. The Venetians were not content with it; nor was the king of Spain; with France he was holding discussions⁶ on that enterprise; and nonetheless, with his ferocity and impetuosity, he personally put that expedition into motion. This move made Spain and the Venetians stand still in suspense, the latter out of fear and the other because of the desire he had to recover the whole kingdom of Naples. From the other side he pulled the king of France after him; because when that king saw him move, and since he desired to make Julius his friend in order to bring down the Venetians, he judged he could not deny him his troops without injuring him openly. Julius thus accomplished with his impetuous move what no other pontiff, with all human prudence, would ever have accomplished, because if he had

5. The formal or plural you should be understood here.

6. lit.: reasonings.

waited to depart from Rome with firm conclusions and everything in order, as any other pontiff would have done, he would never have succeeded. For the king of France would have had a thousand excuses and the others would have raised in him a thousand fears. I wish to omit all his other actions, since all have been alike and all succeeded well. And the brevity of his life did not allow him to feel the contrary, because if times had come when he had needed to proceed with caution, his ruin would have followed: he would never have deviated from those modes to which nature inclined him.⁷

I conclude, thus, that when fortune varies and men remain obstinate in their modes, men are happy while they are in accord, and as they come into discord, unhappy. I judge this indeed, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly. And so always, like a woman, she is the friend of the young, because they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity.

7. See *Discourses on Livy* III 9.

❧XXVI❧

Exhortation to Seize Italy and to Free Her from the Barbarians

Thus, having considered everything discussed above, and thinking to myself whether in Italy at present the times have been tending to the honor of a new prince, and whether

there is matter to give opportunity to someone prudent and virtuous to introduce a form that would bring honor to him and good to the community of men there, it appears to me that so many things are tending to the benefit of a new prince that I do not know what time has ever been more apt for it. And if, as I said,¹ it was necessary for anyone wanting to see the virtue of Moses that the people of Israel be enslaved in Egypt, and to learn the greatness of spirit of Cyrus, that the Persians be oppressed by the Medes, and to learn the excellence of Theseus, that the Athenians be dispersed, so at present to know the virtue of an Italian spirit² it was necessary that Italy be reduced to the condition in which she is at present, which is more enslaved than the Hebrews, more servile than the Persians, more dispersed than the Athenians, without a head, without order, beaten, despoiled, torn, pillaged, and having endured ruin of every sort.

And although up to now a glimmer has shone in someone who could judge that he had been ordered by God for her redemption, yet later it was seen that in the highest course of his actions, he was repulsed by fortune. So, left as if lifeless, she awaits whoever it can be that will heal her wounds, and put an end to the sacking of Lombardy, to the taxes on the kingdom and on Tuscany, and cure her of her sores that have festered now for a long time. One may see how she prays God to send her someone to redeem her from these barbarous cruelties and insults. One may also see her ready and disposed to follow a flag, provided that there be someone to pick it up. Nor may one see at present anyone in whom she can hope more than in your illustrious house, which with its fortune and virtue, supported by God and by the Church of which it is now prince,³ can put itself at the

1. See Chapter 6.

2. *spirito*, not *animo*.

3. Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, Lorenzo's uncle, became Pope Leo X in 1513.

head of this redemption. This is not very difficult if you⁴ summon up the actions and lives of those named above. And although these men are rare and marvelous, nonetheless they were men, and each of them had less opportunity than the present; for their undertaking was not more just than this one, nor easier, nor was God more friendly to them than to you. Here there is great justice: “for war is just to whom it is necessary, and arms are pious when there is no hope but in arms.”⁵ Here there is very great readiness, and where there is great readiness, there cannot be great difficulty, provided that your house keeps its aim on the orders of those whom I have put forth. Besides this, here may be seen extraordinary things without example, brought about⁶ by God: the sea has opened; a cloud has escorted you along the way; the stone has poured forth water; here manna has rained;⁷ everything has concurred in your greatness. The remainder you must do yourself. God does not want to do everything, so as not to take free will from us and that part of the glory that falls to us.

And it is not a marvel if none of the Italians named before has been able to do what it is hoped will be done by your illustrious house, and if in so many revolutions in Italy and in so many maneuvers of war, it always appears that military virtue has died out in her. This arises from the fact that her ancient orders were not good, and that there has not been anyone who has known how to find new ones; and nothing brings so much honor to a man rising newly as the

4. The formal or plural you.

5. Quoted in Latin from Livy IX. 1; see also *Discourses on Livy* III 12, and *Florentine Histories* V 8, where the same quotation is used to emphasize necessity rather than justice.

6. lit.: conducted.

7. These are references to miracles that occurred as Moses led the Israelites to the promised land, just before the revelation at Mount Sinai. They are not given in the same order as in the Bible, Exodus 14:21, 13:21, 17:6, 16:4.

new laws and the new orders found by him. When these things have been founded well and have greatness in them, they make him revered and admirable. And in Italy matter is not lacking for introducing every form; here there is great virtue in the limbs, if it were not lacking in the heads. Look how in duels and in encounters with few the Italians are superior in force, dexterity, and ingenuity. But when it comes to armies, they do not compare. And everything follows from the weakness at the head, because those who know are not obeyed, and each thinks he knows, since up to now no one has been able to raise himself, both by virtue and by fortune, to a point where the others will yield to him. From this it follows that in so much time, in so many wars made in the last twenty years, when there has been an army entirely Italian it has always proven to be bad. The first testimony to this is Taro, then Alessandria, Capua, Genoa, Vailà, Bologna, Mestre.⁸

Thus, if your illustrious house wants to follow those excellent men who redeemed their countries,⁹ it is necessary before all other things, as the true foundation of every undertaking, to provide itself with its own arms; for one cannot have more faithful, nor truer, nor better soldiers. And although each of them may be good, all together become better when they see themselves commanded by their prince, and honored and indulged by him. It is necessary, therefore, to prepare such arms for oneself so as to be able with Italian virtue to defend oneself from foreigners. And although Swiss and Spanish infantry are esteemed to be terrifying, nonetheless there is a defect in both, by means of which a third order might not only oppose them but also be confident of overcoming them. For the Spanish cannot withstand horse, and the Swiss have to be afraid of infantry if they meet in combat any that are obstinate like themselves. Hence it has been seen, and will be seen by experi-

8. Seven battles that were Italian defeats, from 1495 to 1513.

9. lit.: provinces.

ence, that the Spanish cannot withstand French cavalry, and the Swiss are ruined by Spanish infantry. And although a complete experiment of this last has not been seen, yet an indication of it was seen in the battle of Ravenna,¹⁰ when the Spanish infantry confronted the German battalions, who use the same order as the Swiss. There the Spanish, with their agile bodies and aided by their bucklers, came between and under the Germans' pikes and attacked them safely without their having any remedy for it; and if it had not been for the cavalry that charged them, they would have worn out all the Germans. Having thus learned the defects of both of these infantry, one can order a new one that would resist horse and not be afraid of infantry; this will be done by a regeneration of arms and a change in orders. And these are among those things which, when newly ordered, give reputation and greatness to a new prince.

Thus, one should not let this opportunity pass, for Italy, after so much time, to see her redeemer. I cannot express with what love he would be received in all those provinces that have suffered from these floods from outside; with what thirst for revenge, with what obstinate faith, with what piety, with what tears. What doors would be closed to him? What peoples would deny him obedience? What envy would oppose him? What Italian would deny him homage? This barbarian domination stinks to everyone. Then may your illustrious house take up this task with the spirit and hope in which just enterprises are taken up, so that under its emblem this fatherland may be ennobled and under its auspices the saying of Petrarch's may come true:

Virtue will take up arms against fury,
and make the battle short,
because the ancient valor in Italian hearts
is not yet dead.¹¹

10. April 11, 1512; see Chapter 3.

11. Petrarch, *Italia mia*, 93–96.