

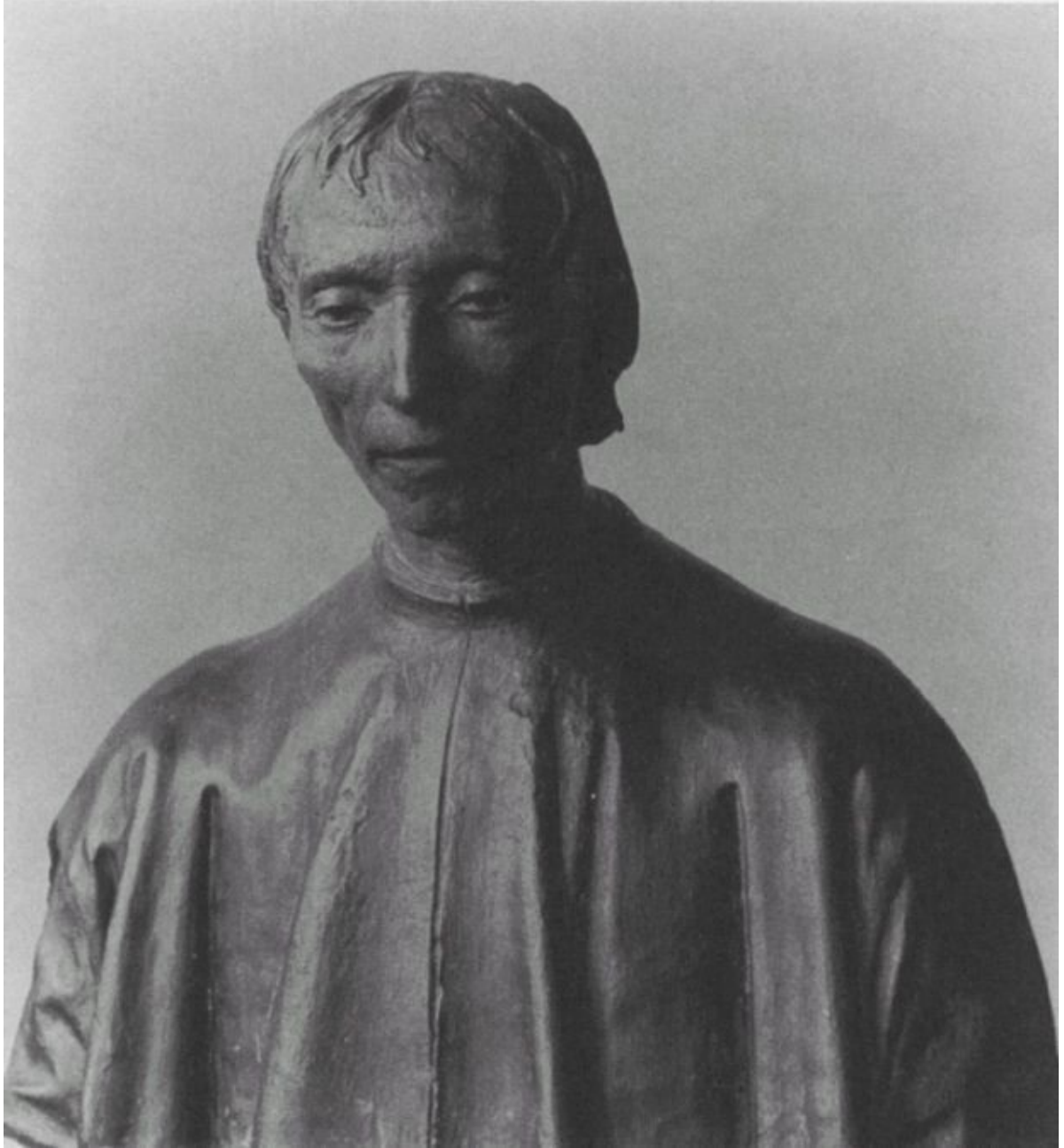
MACHIAVELLI

THE CHIEF WORKS AND OTHERS Volume III



ALLAN GILBERT, TRANSLATOR

MACHIAVELLI



MACHIAVELLI

THE CHIEF WORKS AND OTHERS

TRANSLATED BY ALLAN GILBERT

VOLUME THREE

Non in exercitu, nec in robore . . .

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Terra cotta bust of Machiavelli by an unknown artist, in the Societa Columbaria,

Florence. (Alinari photograph)

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San Leo in 1957

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Plates illustrating the ART OF WAR

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The expulsion of the devil from one possessed

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Bags from which the names of Florentines who were to hold public office were drawn.

TEXTS USED IN TRANSLATING

Tutte le opere storiche e letterarie di Niccolò, *a cura di Guido Mazzoni e Mario Casella, Firenze 1929.*

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VOLUME THREE

THE HISTORY OF FLORENCE

List of Books

[DEDICATION TO POPE CLEMENT VII]

[PREFACE]

1. [FROM THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE TO 1434]
2. [THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF FLORENCE, TO 1353]
3. [FLORENCE FROM 1353 TO 1414]
4. [FLORENTINE AFFAIRS FROM 1414 TO 1434]
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[Late in the year 1520 Machiavelli received from Pope Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici) a commission to write the History of Florence. Eight books were presented to Pope Clement VII in 1525; no others were completed.]

Machiavelli announces dissatisfaction with the historians of Florence accessible to him, in that they dealt inadequately with the internal affairs of the city, though they were satisfactory for external matters, such as warfare. From his own attempt to treat those internal affairs, however, he allowed himself to be turned aside, partly through his interest in the Sforza wars in Lombardy, partly because all Italian activities were of import for his city. Moreover, Machiavelli did not spend his life in archives. But an archival attempt would have demanded that he be ahead of his age, and would have occupied time far longer than the four years and a half he gave to the History. What could one man hope to do with the uncalendared records of the city of Florence? The latter part of his work and the notes for its continuation do indicate documentary study. Yet part of the History is only a compilation not to be used, as historians did until an astonishingly recent time, as a source for facts. Still there is in it truth enough to serve as a basis for Machiavelli's observations on man as a political animal.

One of the chief of these is that government exists for the common good. To forgetfulness of this truism is to be charged the long list of Florentine troubles, where political changes were made for the benefit of a party, not for that of the city as a whole. The city was continually torn by divisions, not united for the happiness of the citizens. On this internal strife Machiavelli often remarks, handling his material to emphasize it. For example, the story of Michele di Lando, not for the most part unreliable in fact, is that of a man who in his unselfish virtue thought of the city as a whole, and for his patriotism suffered ingratitude inspired by party spirit.

Avowedly fictitious are the frequent orations in the Thucydidean manner of the Florentine historians before Machiavelli. These are developed beyond dramatic requirements into expositions of social and political truths suggested by Florentine events. Incidentally, these orations enabled Machiavelli to deal with the problem of the Medici. They were de facto rulers of Florence, and her only possible rulers. For a wise patriot the clear path was to accept them, hoping for a better future.

So Machiavelli did. He writes of the family up to the death of Lorenzo, where his history ends, with a frankness that shows his courage or his knowledge of the good sense of the living Medici. Yet one of his friends, Donato Giannotti, reports that Niccolò often said to him:

I cannot write this history from the time when Cosimo took over the government up to the death of Lorenzo just as I would write it if I were free from all reasons for caution. The actions will be true, and I shall not omit anything; merely I shall leave out discussing the universal causes of the events. For instance, I shall relate the events and the circumstances that came about when Cosimo took over the government; I shall leave untouched any discussion of the way and of the means and tricks with which one attains such power; and if anyone nevertheless wants to understand Cosimo, let him observe well what I shall have his opponents say, because what I am not willing to say as coming from myself, I shall have his opponents say.

Yet even in such speeches, Machiavelli sometimes substituted for his first draft softer second thoughts. For example, a speech by Rinaldo degli Albizzi is changed from direct to indirect discourse and the following is bolder than the final form:

Union and prosperity are impossible while Cosimo de' Medici lives in this city, because his way of living surpasses what is proper for a citizen; his excessive wealth makes him bold; with it he has bribed all the heads of the common people and many other citizens, in such a way that in all the councils and magistracies of the city he can do what he wants to; our soldiers are all his partisans, because he employs whom he likes, whom he likes he gets rid of . . . He lacks nothing of being prince but the title. It is the duty therefore of a good citizen to find a remedy for this, to call the people to the Public Square, and to take over the government, in order to restore to the republic her liberty. [Cf. book 4, chap. 28.]

That even a weakened form of this stood in the manuscript put in the hands of Giulio de' Medici, Pope Clement VII, is astonishing enough, a tribute to Machiavelli's desire to write a history that would inspire all lovers of the common good of man in whatever age or nation.]

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- <http://thermco.pl/library/The-New-Olympians--Pegasus--Book-3-.pdf>
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