

Name _____

The Prince

Niccolo Machiavelli

Chapter XIV

That Which Concerns a Prince on the Subject of the Art of War

1 A PRINCE ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for
2 his study, than war and its rules and discipline; for this is the sole art that
3 belongs to him who rules, and it is of such force that it not only upholds those
4 who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from a private station to
5 that rank. And, on the contrary, it is seen that when princes have thought more
6 of ease than of arms they have lost their states. And the first cause of your losing
7 it is to neglect this art; and what enables you to acquire a state is to be master of
8 the art. Francesco Sforza, through being martial, from a private person became
9 Duke of Milan; and the sons, through avoiding the hardships and troubles of
10 arms, from dukes became private persons... And therefore a prince who does
11 not understand the art of war, over and above the other misfortunes already
12 mentioned, cannot be respected by his soldiers, nor can he rely on them. He
13 ought never, therefore, to have out of his thoughts this subject of war, and in
14 peace he should addict himself more to its exercise than in war; this he can do in
15 two ways, the one by action, the other by study.

16 As regards action, he ought above all things to keep his men well organized and
17 drilled, to follow incessantly the chase, by which he accustoms his body to
18 hardships, and learns something of the nature of localities, and gets to find out
19 how the mountains rise, how the valleys open out, how the plains lie, and to
20 understand the nature of rivers and marshes, and in all this to take the greatest

Assessment

Literacy: *N. Machiavelli*

21 care. Such knowledge is useful in two ways. Firstly, he learns to know his
22 country, and is better able to undertake its defense; afterwards, by means of the
23 knowledge and observation of that locality, he understands with ease any other
24 which it may be necessary for him to study hereafter; because the hills, valleys,
25 and plains, and rivers and marshes that are, for instance, in Tuscany, have a
26 certain resemblance to those of other countries, so that with a knowledge of the
27 aspect of one country one can easily arrive at a knowledge of others. And the
28 prince that lacks this skill lacks *the essential*, which it is desirable that a captain
29 should possess, for it teaches him to surprise his enemy, to select quarters, to
30 lead armies, to array the battle, to besiege towns to advantage...

31 But to exercise the intellect the prince should read histories, and study there the
32 actions of illustrious men, to see how they have borne themselves in war, to
33 examine the causes of their victories and defeat, so as to avoid the latter and
34 imitate the former; and above all do as an illustrious man did, who took as an
35 exemplar one who had been praised and famous before him, and whose
36 achievements and deeds he always kept in his mind, as it is said Alexander the
37 Great imitated Achilles, Caesar [imitated] Alexander, Scipio [imitated] Cyrus.
38 And whoever reads the life of Cyrus, written by Xenophon, will recognize
39 afterwards in the life of Scipio how that imitation was his glory, and how in
40 chastity, affability, humanity, and liberality Scipio conformed to those things
41 which have been written of Cyrus by Xenophon. A wise prince ought to observe
42 some such rules, and never in peaceful times stand idle, but increase his
43 resources with industry in such a way that they may be available to him in
44 adversity, so that if fortune changes it may find him prepared to resist her blows.