CONTENTS

Preface vii

PART I. THE FLORENTINE SECRETARY 1

1. A Shadowy Period: The First Half of His Life 3
2. The Relationship with Savonarola 7
3. The Activity in the Chancery 11
4. The Correspondence with Functionaries of the Domain 19
5. Diplomatic Activity 24
6. The Experience of the Early Missions 28
7. Changes of Fortune and the Ghiribizzi al Soderino 36
8. The Florentine Ordinance 41
9. The Venetian Defeat and the Reconquest of Pisa 51
10. The End of the Republic and the Return of the Medici 58
PART II. EXILE IN HIS HOMELAND

11. The Confinement at Sant’Andrea
12. “I have composed a little work On Princedoms”
13. The “Myth” of The Prince
14. Frequenting the Orti Oricellari
15. An Original Comment on Livy
16. The Art of War

PART III. “NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI, HISTORIAN, COMIC WRITER, AND TRAGIC WRITER”

17. A New Season in Machiavelli’s Life
18. A Return to Business
19. “The annals or the history of Florence”
20. “The things done at home and abroad by the Florentine people”
21. The Friendship with Guicciardini
22. Clizia and the Musical Madrigals
23. Final Act

Appendix: Notes on the Use of the Word Stato in Machiavelli

Notes
Index
A Shadowy Period

THE FIRST HALF OF HIS LIFE

It may seem curious that we are ignorant of almost everything about Machiavelli until 15 June 1498, when, at the age of twenty-nine, he became secretary of the Florentine chancery. It is almost as though his life began only when he entered the service of the city of his birth. He was so deeply linked to Florence that in a letter written in the final months of his life he declared: “I love my native city more than my soul.”

The scant information that we do have regarding his youth has reached us thanks to the Libro di ricordi (Diary) of his father, Bernardo. The latter was a doctor of law and belonged to a family counted, in previous centuries, among the “middle class, noted families”; they were called upon on a number of occasions to occupy important positions as magistrates of the comune, but then the family fell into decline, especially following the ascent to power of the Medici. From Bernardo’s diary we understand that his financial situation was not robust, and the environment in which his son grew up was very modest. Machiavelli himself declared: “I was born poor and I learnt earlier to stint myself rather than to prosper.”

At the age of seven, he began to study the basic elements of Latin and at twelve to write in that language. Although he
may not have received a refined humanist education, we should not take literally the statements of the historian Paolo Giovio, who wrote that Machiavelli had “no knowledge of Latin, or at least very little.” It is scarcely believable that—in the most glorious period of Florentine humanism—an almost unknown young man who was ignorant of the language then used in public affairs and international relations would have been called to fulfill the role of secretary of the second chancery, which was concerned not only with internal matters but also with war and therefore relationships with other states. Instead, Giovio’s statements should be interpreted to mean that he considered Machiavelli’s knowledge insufficient for composing works in that language, and we should also bear in mind that his encounter with Machiavelli happened when the latter was writing *The History of Florence*. Machiavelli’s decision to write the work in Italian, during the years when a lively debate had begun on the vernacular language, may have given rise to a certain disdain on the part of Giovio, who professed he was a historian who always wrote his works in Latin.

It appears, however, that Machiavelli had not learned the Greek language, even though in those times Florence was the chief center in Europe of the new Hellenistic culture, where Guillaume Budé, for example—the humanist who can be said to have introduced the new wisdom to France—perfected his teachings. One can quibble at length on Machiavelli’s ignorance of Greek only to be confronted by the fact that he was able to draw on the sixth book of Polybius, which did not yet have a published translation into Latin, when he used it in the *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*. In the *Libro di ricordi* we note that Bernardo Machiavelli was an inquisitive reader both of recent works, such as the *Italia illustrata* and the *Decades of History from the Deterioration of the Roman Empire* by Flavio Biondo, and ancient texts,
from Cicero to Pliny to Ptolemy. Thus, on 22 September 1475 he noted having negotiated with the printer Niccolò Alamanno the editing of the index of geographic names contained in Livy’s *Decades* and on 5 July 1476 of having kept “as a reward for my efforts” the printed pages of the work. The young Machiavelli therefore had the opportunity to read Livy at an early age, and besides we know from his father that, at seventeen years of age, he had the book rebound in half leather. Perhaps some discussions and hypotheses regarding the *Discourses* would have been clarified if this book had come down to us, or if at least we knew which edition was in Bernardo’s possession.

Of the third decade of Machiavelli’s life, a period that was decisive for his intellectual development, we have only a few glimmers. A codex, transcribed in Machiavelli’s hand apparently in this period, was found in the Vatican Library of the *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*) by Lucretius, the work that had been rediscovered at the start of the fifteenth century in a monastery at San Gallo. It is reasonable to suppose that Machiavelli would not have undertaken such a demanding work without a real interest in this text of the highest poetry; at the same time this text is essential for the knowledge of a branch of Greek philosophy, which he no doubt found congenial, as we are aware from the numerous echoes of Lucretius that we find in his works.

In any event, the studies of his youth must have concentrated principally on the historians and political thinkers of the classical era that recur in his works: Livy himself, Tacitus, Sallust, and, among the Greeks, Plutarch, Polybius, and Xenophon. These are the writers to whom it is permissible to suppose he referred when in 1513 he wrote the famous letter to his friend Francesco Vettori, telling him that he had written *The Prince*: 

On the coming of evening, I return to my house and enter my study; and at the door I take off the day’s clothing, covered with mud and dust, and put on garments regal and courtly; and reclothed appropriately, I enter the ancient courts of men, where, received by them with affection, I feed on that food which only is mine and which I was born for, where I am not ashamed to speak with them and to ask them the reason for their actions; and they in their kindness answer me; and for four hours of time I do not feel boredom, I forget every trouble, I do not dread poverty, I am not frightened by death; entirely I give myself over to them.\(^{13}\)

However, the legal texts his father owned were certainly not extraneous to his thoughts; a careful reading of his writings reveals echoes of them on some pages.\(^{14}\) Although notarial studies were no longer required at that time to be nominated to the Florentine chancery, a juridical training was part of Machiavelli’s education.
## INDEX

Acciaioli, Alamanno, 164  
Acciaiuoli, Roberto, 16–17, 184  
Agathocles, 91  
Agnadello, battle of, 51, 196  
Alamanni, Lodovico, 14, 140  
Alamanni, Luigi, 190  
Àlbizzi, The, xiv, 137, 152, 157, 165; Rinaldo di, 163  
Alexander VI, Pope, 7, 24, 31, 78, 90, 95  
_Ambassadors, The_ (Hans Holbein), 26–27  
Anti-Machiavellianism, xii–xiii, 239n13  
Alexander the Great, 207  
Arezzo, 23, 24, 43  
Ariosto, Ludovico, ix, 13, 14, 126, 241  
Aristophanes, 130  
Aristotle, xi  
Baglioni, Giampaolo, 32–34, 36  
Bandello, Matteo, 133  
Baron, Hans, xiii, xiv, 243n19, 255n22  
Becchi, Ricciardo, 8, 9  
Bentivoglio, Giovanni, 32  
Biondo, Flavio, 4, 86  
Black Death, 156  
Bobbio, Norberto, 193–94, 197, 217  
Bologna, 36, 61  
Borgia, Cesare, _see_ Valentino, The  
Botero, Giovanni, 119–20, Bracciolini, Poggio, 13, 145, 151–52, 158, 166, 206, 224n12  
Brancacci, Giuliano, 133  
Bruni, Leonardo, xiv, 13, 145, 151, 152, 158, 165, 166, 205, 206, 222n20, 242n5, 251n22  
Budé, Guillaume, 4  
Buonaccorsi, Biagio, 13, 15 224n11  
Buondelmonti, Zanobi, 144, 190  
Burckhardt, Jacob, ix, 21–22, 253n40  
Busini, Giovambattista, xii, 248n14, 252n38  
Calgacus, 164  
Calvino, Italo, 110
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambrai, League of</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capponi, Niccolò</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardona, Ramón de</td>
<td>64–67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpi</td>
<td>170–71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casavecchia, Filippo</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castracani, Castruccio</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalcanti, Bartolomeo</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chabod, Federico</td>
<td>83, 196, 199, 208, 228n1, 248n13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor</td>
<td>31, 118, 147, 180–81, 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles VII, King of France</td>
<td>vii, xi1–18, 147, 180–81, 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiana, Val di</td>
<td>23, 24, 43, 60, 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cicero</td>
<td>5, 98–99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciompi, revolt of</td>
<td>136–37, 163–64, 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognac, League of</td>
<td>181; War of the League of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonna family</td>
<td>90, 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonna, Fabrizio</td>
<td>15, 107, 122–26, 182, 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonna, Prospero</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commynes, Philippe de</td>
<td>96, 225n1 to Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, Cesare</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, Christopher</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copernicus, Nicolaus</td>
<td>x, 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corsini, Marietta, wife of Niccolò</td>
<td>Machiavelli, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-Reformation</td>
<td>viii, xii, 100, 119–20, 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cremona</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croce, Benedetto</td>
<td>97, 218, 239n19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cybo, Innocenzo</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyrus, King of Persia</td>
<td>27, 89, 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d'Amboise, Georges, Archbishop of Rouen</td>
<td>28–29, 60, 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d'Appiano, Iacopo, Lord of Piombino</td>
<td>28, 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d'Este, Isabella</td>
<td>1509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da Fermo, Oliverotto</td>
<td>32, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da Sangallo, Giuliano</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da Vinci, Leonardo</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dante (also Dante Alighieri)</td>
<td>ix, xii, 80–81, 163, 180, 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius, King of Persia</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Gama, Vasco</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de Sanctis, Francesco</td>
<td>xi–xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Del Nero, Francesco</td>
<td>17, 151, 241n1 and 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>della Casa, Francesco</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionisotti, Carlo</td>
<td>79, 149, 223–241n8, 231n1 and 3, 237n1, 242n6 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empoli</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightenment, Age of</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>vii, 76–77, 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ennius</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus, Desiderius</td>
<td>xii, 36, 100, 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabius Maximus</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faloconetti, Iacopo (il Fornicaio)</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Febvre, Lucien</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferdinand, King of Aragon</td>
<td>Naples, Sicily, and Valencia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Index

(Ferdinand the Catholic) x–xi, 59, 62, 66, 73–74, 99

Ferrara, 58–60; Duke of, 11, 61, 187, 198


Foix, Gaston of, 64

France; 47, 48, 50, 51, 58–65, 122–24, 138, 148, 180–85; Machiavelli’s views of, 28–30, 73, 75, 76–77, 88,

Francis I, King of France, 29, 118, 147, 180–81, 186

Fregoso, Ottaviano, 129

Frundsberg, Georg von, 186

Garigliano, battle of, 35, 47

Genoa, 58, 59, 60, 129, 157, 183

Gentile, Giovanni, 119–20

Germany, vii, 186; Machiavelli’s views of, 29–31, 94, 115

Giannotti, Donato, 146, 160–61, 179

Gilbert, Felix, 149, 161, 227n17, 234n4, 237n10,

Giovio, Paolo, 3–4, 189

Giorlami, Raffaello, 27

Giungi, Michele, 143

Gonzaga, Gian Francesco, 53

Gramsci, Antonio, 85, 209

Greece, ancient, 86, 125, 182, 208

Guelphs, 154, 196, 215

Guicciardini, Francesco, x, xvii, 46, 59, 119, 121, 150, 168–76, 180–89, 200–01, 214, 229n1, 243n23, 244n26

Guicciardini, Luigi, 17, 18, 133

Guicciardini, Piero, 48

Guinegate, battle of, 76

History of Florence (Francesco Guicciardini), 46, 59

History of Italy (Francesco Guicciardini), x

Imola, 33

Index of Prohibited Books, xii, 100

Istanbul, 129

Julius II, Pope, 29, 35, 36–37, 43, 58–63, 66, 77, 90–95

Lando, Michele di, 165

Landsknechts, 186–88

Lateran Council (1512–17), 61

Le Febvre, Jehan, 133

Leo X, Pope, see de’ Medici, Giovanni, Cardinal

Livy, 5, 23, 80, 106, 108, 156, 176, 183

Louis XI, King of France, 87

Louis XII, King of France, 11, 28–29, 51, 54, 73, 75, 76, 86, 195; intervention in Italy, 58–64

Lucca, 52, 143–4, 216

For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu
## Index

Lucretius, xii, 5, 130, 189
Luther, Martin, 101, 236n23, 245n1
Lysander, 172

Machiavelli, Bernardo, 3–5
Machiavelli, Niccolò:
— Borgia Cesare (the Valentino), missions to, 24–25, 31–35
— death of, 189–91
— exile, 71–84
— Florentine chancery, role in, 11–18, 19–23
— Florentine militia, role in establishment of, 41–47, 60
— France, views on, 28–30, 73, 75
— Germany, views on, 29–31
— Guicciardini, Francesco, relationship with, 121, 150, 168–175, 176, 180–84, 186–89
— Latin and Greek, knowledge of, 3–5, 81–83
— Medici, relationship with, 135–40
— Orti Oricellari, visits to; xvi, 103–07, 108, 118, 122, 140, 144
— Savonarola, Girolamo, relationship with, 7–10
— Spain, views on, 73–75
— state, concept of, 193–218
— War of the League of Cognac, activities during, 180–189
— youth of, 3–5

Machiavelli, Niccolò, works of:
— Art of War, The, viii, 15, 39, 45, 96, 106–07, 122–26, 145, 159, 211
— Ass, The, 104–05, 133, 133, 202
— Cagione dell’Ordinanza, La (The Reason for the Militia), 22–23, 45–46, 89, 96, 210
— Clizia, 176–79
— Discourse on Remodeling the Government of Florence, A (Discourse), 136–42
— Favola, 133–34
— Ghiribizzi al Soderini, xv, 36–39, 79–80, 89, 117
— History of Florence (History), viii, 4, 86, 92, 136, 143–167, 174, 191, 196, 203, 205, 211, 214
— Mandrake, The, viii, 18, 130–33, 171, 176–79, 191
— Mantua, 53, 64
— Marignano, Battle of, 118
— Marignano, 184, 186
— Mariscotta, courtesan, 174
Marx, Karl, 164, 194
Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor, 31, 51, 58, 59, 61, 118; invasion of Italy, 47–50, 53–55
Miencke, Friedrich, 235n13, 239n19
Mirandola, Siege of, 36, 60
Mithradates, 164
Modena, 60, 169–70
Mohacs, battle of, 186
Montaigne, Michel de, 110, 251n27
Morone, Girolamo, 180
Moses, 89, 100, 211
Naples, 35, 47, 59, 74, 87, 95, 116, 186–87, 216
Nardi, Jacopo, 190
Novara, battle of, 64, 76
Optimates, the, 9, 42–44, 50, 55–56, 66, 67, 93, 137, 165
Orsini family, 32–34, 90
Orvieto, 189
Orti Oricellari (see also Rucellai Palace), 146, 149, 227n17; Machiavelli’s visits to, xvi, 103–07, 108, 118, 122, 140, 144
Padua, 53, 55; University of, 38, 219–20n4
Palla, Battista della, 135
Passerini, Silvio, 188
Pavia, Battle of, 148, 174, 180
Paul III, Pope, 220n7
Paul IV, Pope, xii
Pazzi, conspiracy of the, 159, 243n23
Pescia, 20–21
Petrucci, Pandolfo, 32
Pisa, war with Florence, 11–12, 20–21, 40, 41–43, 51–53
Pistoia, 23, 43, 187
Pliny, 5
Plutarch, 5, 13, 80, 106, 172, 190, 251n27
Pocock, J.G.A., xiii
Politics (Aristotle), xi
Index

Poliziano, 79, 108–09, 246n2 and 4, 249n6
Polybius, 4, 5, 81–83, 106
Prato, Sack of, 47, 64, 65
Protestant reformation, vii
Ptolemy, 5, 37–38, 80; Ptolemaic theory, x
Public Good, League of, 87
Pulci, Luigi, ix

Quirini, Vincenzo, 49
Ranke, Leopold, 166
Ragusa, 144
Ravenna, battle of, 64, 74
Religion, Wars of, viii, 123, 209
Ricordi (Francesco Guicciardini), 119, 201, 230n6
Ridolfi, Niccolò, 188
Ridolfi, Roberto, 15, 80, 84, 129, 170, 230n7
Romans, Letter to the, x
Romolo, Andrea di, 15
Romulus, 89, 100, 211
Rucellai, Bernardo, 44, 106, 223–24n8, 227n17
Rucellai, Cosimo, 106
Rucellai Palace (see also Orti Oricellari), 13, 107, 122, 135
Sacrobosco, Joannes de (John Holywood), 219n4
Sallust, 5, 80, 164
Salutati, Coluccio, 13
Salutati Raffacani, Barbara (la Barbara), 177
Salviati family, 143; Salviati, Alamanno, 9, 43, 55–56; Salviati, Giovanni, Cardinal, 123
Sasso, Gennaro, 80, 83, 96, 190, 230n4, 231n8, 237n14, 244n30, 248n18, 249n6, 252n35
Savonarola, Girolamo, 7–10
Scarperia, 21
Sforza family, 64
Sforza, Galeazzo Maria, 159
Sforza Riario, Caterina, lady of Forlì, 28
Sforza, Francesco, 180, 185
Siniaglia, massacre of, 33–34, 90
Soderini, Francesco, Cardinal, 24, 42, 44, 61, 72, 73
Soderini, Giovan Battista, 39, 43
Soderini, Pier, Gonfalonier of Florence, 9, 17, 43, 44, 47, 48, 59, 63, 65, 66, 92, 93, 137, 138, 144, 145, 168
Sparta, 88, 172, 201
Strozzi, Filippo, 141, 182, 190, 217
Strozzi, Lorenzo, 135
Studio Fiorentino, 12, 144, 223n5, 244n3
Switzerland, xi, 47, 48, 59, 64, 74, 76–77, 171, 185–86
Syracuse, 91
Tacitus, 5, 80, 106, 164, 190
Terence, 130
Theseus, 89, 200, 211
Tours, Council of, 60

For general queries, contact webmaster@press.princeton.edu
Trent, Council of, 121
Trento, 120
Trivilzio, Gian Jacopo, 61
Urbino, 24, 32, 34, 90; Duke of, 184

Varchi, Benedetto, xii, 248n18, 252n38
Vatican Library, The, 5
Venice, xii, 25, 26, 51, 53–54, 58–59, 63, 76, 87, 137, 156–57, 176, 181, 199, 201, 240n9; Florence, relationship with, 11, 41, 50, 55
Verdelot, Philippe, 177
Vernacci, Giovanni, 129
Verona, 53–54, 58, 61
Vespucci, Agostino, 15, 16, 53, 104

Vespucci, Bartolomeo, 38
Vettori, Francesco, xi, xvi, 5–6, 16, 18, 22, 29, 32, 48–49, 71–73, 76–77, 80, 83, 95, 103, 104, 130, 133, 148, 170, 187–8, 197
Villani, Giovanni,
Villari, Pasquale, 161, 162, 191
Virgil, 100, 156
Visconti family, 137, 205; Visconti, Filippo Maria, 163; Visconti, Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, xiii, 158, 243n18
Virgilio, Marcello (Marcello Virgilio di Adriano Berti), 12, 13, 53, 130
Vitelli, Paolo, 11, 12
Vitelli, Vitelozzo, 24, 32
Volterra, 23, 24
Xenophon, 5, 27