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Hum Core

Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, William J. Connell translation and edition (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), pp. 39-123. Note: this edition also has a useful list of study questions, pp. 193-94.

Study Questions:

1. Why is the work given the title, *The Prince*, and what exactly does Machiavelli mean by a "prince"?

2. To whom is the work addressed? What is the significance of this dedication?

3. What is the difference between a principality and a republic?

4. Why does Machiavelli claim that "war is not avoided, but it is postponed to the advantage of others" (p. 47)?

5. What are the "five errors" Louis XII of France made when he invaded Italy? (p. 49)

6. Why is a republic more difficult to occupy than a principality? (Chapter 5)

7. What does it mean to come to power "by virtue" rather than "by fortune"? Discuss two examples of the difference.

8. Who was Cesare Borgia (Duke Valentino), and why should Machiavelli consider his actions "exemplary" for a prince?

9. What is the meaning of the example of Agathocles in Chapter 8?

10. What are "ecclesiastical principalities," and why does Machiavelli dedicate an entire chapter to them?

11. What is the difference between mercenary and auxiliary arms? In what ways are they disadvantageous to a prince? What kind of troops does Machiavelli prefer, and why?

12. What is "the only art that is expected of one who commands" (p. 84)? Why?

13. In Chapter 16, what does Machiavelli mean by "liberality" and why does he advise against it?

14. Why is it better "to be feared than loved" (p. 91)? What are the limits and exceptions to this axiom?

15. Explain Machiavelli's recourse to the analogy of the fox and the lion?

16. Is the reputation of the prince based primarily on substance or appearance? What does this imply about how Machiavelli understands the workings of power?

17. In general, what appears to be Machiavelli's general perception of human behavior?

18. Why does Machiavelli claim that "the best fortress there is is not to be hated by the people" (p. 108)? How does this assertion conform or differ from Machiavelli's basic argument throughout *The Prince*?

19. How are we to understand Machiavelli's concluding remarks in Chapter 25 that "it is better to be impetuous than cautious, for *fortune is a lady*" (p. 119; emphasis added)? What does it mean to depict relations of power in gendered terms (in Machiavelli's text, but also more generally)?

20. Discuss Machiavelli's quotation from Livy (the source text for his more republican *Discourses*): "war is just for those for whom it is necessary, and arms are pious where there is no hope save in arms" (p. 120).