

MACHIAVELLI AS A MILITARY THEORIST

by

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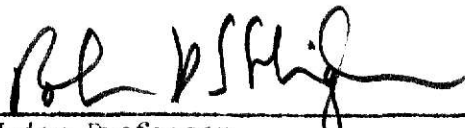
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## INTRODUCTION

Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) famous Renaissance statesman and historian of the Republic of Florence was best known for his book, The Prince, in which he analyzed methods of gaining and holding power in a state. Much has been written about this book by scholars and his impact on political and historical thought but little has been written about him as a military thinker. Since Felix Gilbert's article, "Machiavelli: The Renaissance of the Art of War" in Makers of Modern Strategy (1943) the recognition of Machiavelli as a military theorist has gained ground. **This, in turn, has forced a** reconsideration of the influence of his ideas upon subsequent military thought.

Although Machiavelli spoke of war in general terms in The Prince and more from a political viewpoint, the specifics of military science and the theories to which they gave rise, were not spelled out. The search for specifics had to begin elsewhere. His treatises on The Art of War and The Discourses illustrated his military ideas in detail and proposed a method of dealing with the changing nature of warfare in Renaissance Italy.

Warfare was undergoing revolutionary change during his lifetime. War in the feudal system depended on land tenure; the fief was given to the knight by his lord in exchange for his services in war and it was conducted according to a fixed code of ethics in line with Christian teachings. Therefore, the knight who served in the employ of his lord

in time of war fulfilled a religious and moral obligation. The shakiness of this system became evident in Machiavelli's time.

A rising money economy based on trade, as it existed in Venice and Genoa, started to undermine the agricultural base of the medieval military system. Some of the wealthier cities hired mercenaries instead of requiring the aid of knights. For instance, Florence hired Sir John Hawkwood and seven thousand men in 1390 to defend the city against the Milanese. By 1392 Hawkwood had defeated them. Because of this type of development the foundation of permanent professional armies became possible.

Money was the foundation of these mercenary armies. Men who had never been in the army before joined the ranks; personal gain was their end. These adventurers and cutthroats had everything to gain and hardly anything to lose. With the altered make-up of armies, citizens of the more civilized parts of Europe had very little to do with this "new" soldier.

In addition to the change in the composition of armies new weapons and new tactics had their effect. Although artillery and firearms had existed in a crude form as early as the mid-fourteenth century they only came into general use during Machiavelli's lifetime. In the Middle Ages heavy cavalry had been the most influential arm in deciding battles. Infantry could not stand up alone against the shock effect of massed horsemen. The English victories of Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) proved the worth of infantry in conjunction with longbowmen. Cavalry as the principal arm was on its way out. The Swiss Confederation's victories over the troops of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, at the Battles

of Morat and Nancy in 1476 showed that warfare was in a state of transition. The Swiss countered the cavalry of Charles with pikes (long spears which were held at chest height to combat footmen or planted in the ground to make a "hedgehog", the men being arrayed in ranks of four deep, against cavalry).

Due to these victories, the Swiss tactics became standardized and widely copied. As the military historian Lynn Montross put it: "After their triumph over Burgundy the Swiss could have challenged any army on the Continent . . . ." <sup>1</sup> They became the standard of excellence against which all were measured. Often they were hired as mercenaries by the various contending powers in Italy and they composed the elite units of those armies. So it was that they appeared with the French under Charles VIII in their invasion of Italy in 1494.

That year was the watershed of modern military history. The invasion started the Italian Wars (1494-1525) and showed that warfare, if not completely changed, was at the very least, in a state of transition. As the Italian historian Francesco Guicciardini (friend and contemporary of Machiavelli and the best historian of the period) noted:

A fire and pestilence had entered Italy. States toppled and the methods of governing them changed. The art of war changed too. Before, nearly all of Italy had been divided among five states: the Papacy, Naples, Venice, Milan, and Florence. Each tried to preserve its possessions: each was concerned that no one should occupy anyone else's territory or grow strong enough for the others to fear. For that reason, attention was paid to every slight movement, and a fuss was raised even when only some

tiny castle was at stake. When war did break out, the sides were so evenly balanced, the methods of warfare so slow, and the artillery so inefficient that it took nearly a whole summer to take a castle. Wars were very long, and battles ended with few or no deaths. The French invasion, like a sudden storm, turned everything topsy-turvy. The unity of Italy was broken and shattered, and gone were the care and consideration that each state used to give to common affairs. Seeing cities, duchies, and kingdoms attacked and conquered, everyone sat tight and attended only to his own affairs. No one moved, for fear that a nearby conflagration or the destruction of some nearby place might lead to the burning and destruction of one's own state. Now wars were sudden and violent; entire kingdoms were conquered and captured in less time than it used to take to conquer a village. Sieges were successfully carried out not in months, but in days or hours. Battles were fierce and bloody. And finally, states were maintained, ruined, given, and taken away not by plans drawn up in a study, as used to be the case, but in the field, by force of arms. <sup>2</sup>

The French army of 1494 reflected this change in warfare. It was composed of 40,000 infantry of which 10,000 were Swiss mercenaries and approximately 25,000 cavalry. Of the cavalry there were 6500 lancers including 1000 light horse which were used for scouting purposes. The remainder were retainers for the lancers and each lancer had a few attendants armed with cross-bows. <sup>3</sup>

Accompanying this army was a siege train of artillery, the like of which had not been seen before by the Italians. The field pieces were mostly made of bronze and were drawn by horses. Considering the heavy iron guns with which the Italians were familiar the French guns were quite an improvement; mobile enough to keep pace with a marching army, they were also more mobile in the field and could fire more rapidly than their Italian counterparts. Ammunition for these guns had altered too. The old stone shot was obsolete, as were the iron bombards that had fired them. However, muzzle-loading artillery was still preferred because it was more effective. Breechloading guns were extant at this time but they were not considered to be too practical because they had the unfortunate tendency of letting too much gas escape when fired, thereby reducing the velocity of the shot.

Another weapon, the arquebus, had improved also. Previously, as during the Hundred Years' War, the weapon had been so large that two men could not handle it easily. By shortening the butt and reducing its weight to thirty pounds the weapon could be handled by one man. Greater range and accuracy was achieved by lengthening the barrel and by making a smaller calibre bullet. With the invention of the matchlock the arm improved further. The British military historian, Sir Charles Oman, describing the matchlock said that a cock and trigger was fixed

. . . on to the original simple tube of the hand-gun, the cock having a hole in it through which passed the string of a long coil of 'match' which was kept continually smouldering. A small pan with 'touch powder' was fitted on to the tube, and

a hole in the pan communicated with the powder inside the tube.

When the trigger was pulled and the cock with the smouldering match clashed with the pan, the touch-powder was kindled and

passed on its explosion into the main charge inside the barrel. <sup>4</sup>

The arquebus was an important factor during the Italian Wars. It was used effectively by the French, but to an greater extent and with even a greater effect by the Spanish.

## MACHIAVELLI'S CAREER

It was in this milieu of war and upheaval in 1494 that Machiavelli obtained a position in the Florentine government. Piero de Medici had surrendered his main fortresses on the approach of Charles VIII. This surrender sparked a popular revolt against Piero and he was driven out of Florence in November 1494. A popular government was set up by the Dominican Friar, Savonarola, and it was at this point that Machiavelli's public career began. Little was heard of him, however, until May, 1494, when he was named Second Chancellor to the Grand Council. This followed the execution of Savonarola who, though he had guided the policies of the Florentine Republic, had run afoul of the church hierarchy by his constant criticism of it. The aristocratic faction, not willing to incur the wrath of the Pope had had him condemned to death and burned at the stake. Shortly thereafter Machiavelli received the job of Secretary to the Council of Ten, (a body dealing with diplomacy and war) a post he held for the next fifteen years.

Because he was the head of the Second Chancery and Secretary to the Committee of Ten all the state business of Florence went through his hands. Showing great administrative ability, he was then entrusted by the republic with diplomatic missions to various states, not as a full ambassador but as a government agent. His first diplomatic errand (1500) was to the court of Louis XII of France. This was the first of many; in a period of fourteen years he went to France five times, once to

Germany, several times to Milan and once to every other Italian state that encroached on Florentine concerns. <sup>5</sup>

One of his most fruitful experiences on which he drew for his military writings was his mission to Cesare Borgia, whom he accompanied as a diplomatic envoy during his reduction of Romagna and Cimbria. Sent by Soderini (head of the Florentine Republic at this time) in October 1502, ostensibly to negotiate an alliance with the Borgia, Machiavelli's real purpose was to keep an eye on Borgia and report on developments. Florence at this time played a dangerous game; she wished to stay neutral by not offending the French until their intentions became clear (although they had supported Borgia's moves) while at the same time pursuing her own policy of expansion which could only weaken potential allies against Borgia or weaken their own position vis-a-vis the French. <sup>6</sup>

Another experience which greatly influenced the Florentine Secretary sprang from his duties in regard to the war with the rebellious city of Pisa that Florence had been waging since 1499. He had been intimately involved in one way or another with the war. The heart of the problem for Florence revolved around the pay the mercenaries received. Once in 1499 and again in 1500 the siege of Pisa had collapsed due to outrageous pay demands by Florence's hired soldiers. In both cases, Machiavelli had been sent to convince the mercenaries that their wages would shortly arrive from Florence--all to no avail. <sup>7</sup> These experiences in part explain his adamant opposition to the condottieri in general and his proposals for reform.

The war plan for the year 1503 took a different tack; the Florentines

tried to starve Pisa into submission rather than storming the walls. This too failed when the city of Lucca secretly reprovisioned Pisa. In 1504 a plan to divert the Arno River above Pisa in order to deprive her of an outlet to the sea failed because the difficulty of the task had been underestimated by Soderini. So, when the campaign of 1505 began the Florentines reverted to their traditional attack on the walls of the city. This also failed because of the mercenaries' greed along with the harsh discipline of their captain. <sup>8</sup>

The commander of that army, Antonio Giacomini (member of the Committee of Ten and the army commissioner of Florence) advocated the use of militia from Tuscany as a means of freeing them from reliance on undependable hired armies. After numerous failures in the war with Pisa, the committee had become desperate; they could not afford another debacle.

Giacomini proposed that recruits be garnered from the rural districts and be composed of citizens of the republic. Thus the recruits owed obedience to the civil authority as well as to the military. Mutiny or desertion could then be handled so as to have a direct bearing on the soldier's livelihood; that is, his possessions could be taken by the state and he could be sent into exile if he failed to comply with strict military discipline. <sup>9</sup>

Some members of the committee opposed the militia but for two different reasons. One faction feared Caesarism on the part of Soderini while the other thought that amateurs such as citizen recruits were just not able to master the complexity of war. In other words, only long-term professionals could be effective against Pisa. Both these objections

were met by the Florentine Secretary's militia ordinance of 1506 which drafted conscripts from the Tuscany countryside rather than the cities as being less likely to support a popular dictatorship, and ones with military tendencies to provide as much skill as possible.

The job of recruiting, organizing and training the Tuscan peasants fell to Machiavelli in 1506; he had full authority to do so. Whenever possible he selected those men who had had some military experience, in addition to other criteria such as physical strength and agility. It was also important that the recruit be of fine moral character because of Machiavelli's belief that it would be hard to discipline and keep under control any soldier who lacked it. <sup>10</sup>

These efforts were interrupted in that year by the routine business of his office so that the project did not really get started until 1507. Even then it took two more years to get the militia ready for action. In 1509 they made their presence felt by preventing reinforcements from reaching the city of Pisa and blocking off canals and the river Arno. Their participation made the difference and the city fell on June 8, 1509. <sup>11</sup>

When the Florentine Republic itself fell in September 1512 as a result of the French retreat from Italy (whose power had at least occupied some of Florence's stronger enemies) the Medici returned to Florence-- and to power. Because Machiavelli had opposed them he lost his job and this marked the end of his public career. A little later in 1513 he was accused of being party to a plot to get rid of the Medici, which led to his imprisonment and torture. He did not confess to being involved in the plot but the Medici held him in prison anyway.

After Giuliano de Medici (brother of Piero who ruled Florence)

became Pope Leo X, there was general rejoicing in Florence and Machiavelli was released in the amnesty granted to those who had been involved in the plot. The Medici even pardoned the Soderini. The former Florentine Secretary then retired to his villa outside the city and lived the life of a quiet country gentleman. <sup>12</sup>

During this time he wrote The Prince (1513), The Discourses on Livy (1516), The Art of War (1519), and The History of Florence (1520). All came out after his death in 1527, except The Art of War. The latter was a reflection upon the practical problems facing any prince who would engage in war. In it, however, Machiavelli also wished to provide solutions for the current problems of Italy.

### THE ART OF WAR

The work itself was dedicated to a friend, Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi, who had introduced him to the Medici. The book was in the form of a dialogue which was a common literary device of the time. Set in the Oricellari Gardens, the conversation supposedly took place in 1516 between Cosimo Rucellai, Zanobi Buondelmonti, Battista della Palla, Luigi Alamanni, and the condottiere leader, Fabrizio Colonna who had just returned to Florence after the Lombard War. All these were friends of Machiavelli except for Colonna.

There were seven subdivisions of the book. The first covered the raising, training, and disciplining of troops. The second considered how best to arm them and their tactical formations. The third illustrated an imaginary battle according to Machiavelli's ideas. The fourth was a consideration of military stratagems, while the fifth related methods of march and stratagems en route. Book six concerned itself with camps and fortifications, while the last book discussed the attack and defense of towns.

Some of the ideas and topics discussed in The Art of War were not new. The De Regimine Principum of Egidio Colonna was a good example of the similarity of Machiavellian ideas to their predecessors. Although St. Thomas Aquinas had started the book in 1280, Colonna, his disciple, finished it. He preferred to compose armies of small, select forces in preference to large armies, but Aquinas' disciple realized such an

ideal was no longer possible. The alternative which he advocated was to press everyone into military service regardless of rank or occupation. Machiavelli said much the same thing later except he placed certain restrictions on the composition of the militia, that is, restricting it to citizens of the Republic of Florence.

The prime inspiration for Colonna, as for the later humanists, became Vegetius, a Roman military writer of the fourth century A. D. Though not a military professional, he was a very astute student of military history. He thought that constant training and exercise comprised relevant preparation for war which would stop the decline in the military virtues of the troops and consequent reliance on mercenaries. The same idea was repeated by Machiavelli: "If I were to conscript an army or establish a militia in a state where none had previously existed, it would be necessary to take the best and most qualified men I could find of all ages--provided they were neither too young nor too old to carry arms--in order to discipline them . . . ." <sup>13</sup> He also did not like mercenaries. As the former Florentine Secretary stated in The Prince:

The mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous, and if anyone supports his state by the arms of mercenaries, he will never stand firm or sure, as they are disunited, ambitious, without discipline, faithless, bold amongst friends, cowardly amongst enemies, they have no fear of God, and keep no faith with men. Ruin is only deferred as long as the assault is postponed; in peace you are despoiled by them, and in war by the enemy. The cause of this is that they have no love or other motive to keep them in the field beyond a trifling wage, which

is not enough to make them ready to die for you. They are quite willing to be your soldiers so long as you do not make war, but when war comes, it is either fly or decamp altogether. I ought to have little trouble in proving this, since the ruin of Italy is now caused by nothing else but through her having relied for many years on mercenary arms. <sup>14</sup>

Another important forerunner of Machiavelli, this one anonymous, wrote the Pulcher Tractatus de Materia Belli, compiled sometime between the years 1290 and 1310. This borrowed heavily from Aristotle, Egidio Colonna, and most of all, Vegetius. Again, as in Colonna's work, the author came out in favor of a militia. <sup>15</sup> The only drawback seemed to be whether militia troops would be able to obtain the necessary training.

One other point this anonymous author emphasized was stratagems to confuse the enemy rather than direct confrontation. The use of traitors, sedition fostered amongst the civilian population, ambush, and surprise attacks on stragglers were all seen as a legitimate means to defeat a foe. Bloodless victory became the epitome of the military art. Anything, rather than an out-and-out battle, could be done to destroy and demoralize an enemy so he would withdraw or surrender.

Francesco Petrarch, (1304-1374) scholar, poet, and first humanist of the Italian Renaissance, was a predecessor of Machiavelli in his opinion of mercenaries. He can be considered a precursor also in that he thought all mercenaries should be removed from Italy, although he appeared to be lukewarm towards a militia. Further, by condemning hired soldiers as thieves, murderers, and slothful, ignorant barbarians he even sounded like the Florentine Secretary. <sup>16</sup>

Another early work, De Ingenius Moribus, by Petrus Vergerius, (1404) that paralleled a Machiavellian idea emphasized the importance of physical training along with a variety of exercises as good practice for war. In fact this opinion was commonly voiced in the fifteenth century by a number of educators.<sup>17</sup> The former secretary stressed this with reference to ancient practices:

The ancients, therefore, had very strict laws and ordinances to enforce the constant practice of their exercises in every particular. Their youth were accustomed to run races, to leap, to pitch the bar and to wrestle, all of which result in very necessary qualifications for soldiers.<sup>18</sup>

Other forerunners were Matteo Palmieri (1406-1475), a Florentine statesman and Patricius (1412-1494), a humanist. Palmieri criticized mercenaries and instead, wanted to arm the citizens. Patricius urged that military training for all young men be made mandatory. Both expressed ideas similar to predecessors and to Machiavelli.<sup>19</sup>

The Art of War itself drew heavily on ancient writers such as Frontinus, Livy, Polybius, Vegetius, and to some extent on Caesar and Xenophon. Machiavelli, like other humanists, borrowed a great deal from ancient writers. Similarly, he sought general laws to explain social life and human activities so that any sequence of events could be controlled.

How much did he borrow from these early writers and what was unique to him?

In the first book of The Art of War Machiavelli discussed the criteria for the selection of soldiers; a topic on which he followed Vegetius for advice. Vegetius, though having little practical experience of war was

a student of military history. His book, Military Institutions of the Romans summarized Roman military theory up to his day (c. 383 A. D.). It was intended to be an instructional work for the armies of Valentinian II. The book did not influence those of his own day, perhaps because it was a bit impractical for that time in not taking into account the changes in methods of warfare. It did, however, influence military practice in the Middle Ages.

Machiavelli, following Vegetius, made the general assertion that men from warmer climates produced soldiers that were quick to act and shrewd, but not especially courageous. Those that came from colder climes though dull-witted were stronger and more courageous than their warmer counterparts. <sup>20</sup>

Both writers recommended the recruits be taken from all walks of life so as to have a well-balanced army. The former secretary preferred plowmen, smiths, furriers, carpenters, butchers and hunters for soldiers; he figured the harder the occupation in civilian life, the harder the soldier. Additionally, those chosen were to be men of good moral character. <sup>21</sup>

Sometimes, the only criteria on which to select potential soldiers rested on their initial appearance, age, <sup>22</sup> and the area from whence they came. Those from rural areas were to be taken in preference to those from cities. <sup>23</sup> Ideally they had ". . . quick and lively eyes, muscular necks, wide chests, brawny arms, long fingers, small bellies, round sides, spare legs, and little feet . . . ." <sup>24</sup> These qualities indicated strength and endurance and on these points Machiavelli agreed with

Vegetius completely.

Book two covered arms, training, and tactical formations. Some of the significant information contained in this section came from Polybius. He lived between the years 200 and 118 B. C. and came from an influential family in Greece. One of the many hostages sent to Rome after the battle of Pydna (168 B. C.), he became a friend of Scipio Aemilianus, the son of Aemilius Paullus, the Roman commander at the battle. Due to his distinguished friend Polybius travelled quite a bit in the Roman world and gathered a tremendous amount of information for his history. After Herodotus and Thucydides he was the best historian of the ancient world and the best military historian of the three.

Machiavelli discussed the arms and armor of the ancients, not quite as thoroughly as Polybius, but accurately nonetheless.<sup>25</sup> He then proceeded to choose what arms were most useful for the armies of his day. The former Florentine Secretary chose Roman arms in preference to the current German because the German weapons were too light. Therefore they could not have withstood an attack by a more heavily armed enemy. The disadvantage of infantry against cavalry, if it existed in the Roman army, did not exist for Machiavelli.<sup>26</sup>

The Florentine drew on Vegetius again for his ideas about the training of soldiers. This discipline comprised running and leaping to make the men more agile and able to fight. The men also had to be thoroughly trained in the use of their weapons; swords were two or three times heavier in training so that in battle regular swords were easier to wield. Instructors taught them how to thrust with a sword

instead of hacking or slashing using a pole stuck in the ground to represent an opponent. They were also drilled on how to advance on and retire from an individual foe. Swimming was important too since oftentimes there was no other way to cross a river. <sup>27</sup>

Another help to training reported by Vegetius and repeated by Machiavelli was the marking of soldiers attire in some manner so they knew exactly to what unit they belonged and what place they took in the ranks. Each soldier had this information on his shield and his helmet. The Florentine thought that was a good idea and one worthy of emulation. <sup>28</sup>

The use of sham battles expressed by the Florentine Secretary was borrowed from another ancient writer, Xenophon, born in Athens around 429 B. C. and died about 357 B. C. He was a general, historian, philosopher, and essayist. His most famous work, the Anabasis, retold the story of the Greek mercenaries' fighting march back through Persia to a Greek city on the Black Sea after the collapse of a rebellion against Artaxexes II by Cyrus, his younger brother. The work Machiavelli drew on was a lesser work, Cyropaedia (The Education of Cyrus), which related the rise to prominence of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire.

In the Cyropaedia Xenophon emphasized the mock-battle as being especially useful in training soldiers for the real thing. The great Florentine said the same: "A commander inures his men to sham fights in such a manner that they may be desirous, rather than afraid, to enter into a real one. For it is not the natural courage of men that make an army bold, but order and good discipline . . ." <sup>29</sup>

One other writer inspired the Florentine Secretary: Frontinus, whose book, Stratagems, was a compilation of historical examples intended to illustrate how to defeat an enemy. His proper name was Sextus Julius Frontinus. Few details of his life were recorded but he was probably born about 35 A. D. He held the office of Water Commissioner of Rome and was elected Consul three times, once in 73 or 74 A. D., again in 98 A. D., and the last time in 100 A. D. He was not without military experience, having been the provincial governor of Britain after his first consulship. While there, he subdued the Silures, a tribe in Wales, and built a road called the Via Julia in that district. He returned to Rome in 78 A. D., and promptly dropped from the sight of history for the next twenty years. More than likely he did his writing at this time. Besides the Stratagems he wrote a book on the Art of War (since lost) and another surviving work, the Aqueducts. He died in 103 or 104 A. D.

Frontinus served more often than not as a source for historical examples to back up Machiavelli's theories. In the fictional battle described in book three the artillery only fired once at the advancing troops because the attackers moved faster than the guns could be reloaded. He based that on the example of the Roman general Ventidius (38 B. C.) against the Parthians. Ventidius had allowed the enemy to advance up to his entrenchments so the Roman troops were subjected to as few volleys of arrows as possible when they came forward to engage the Parthians. <sup>30</sup>

Another reason put forward for the ineffectiveness of artillery was that it produced clouds of smoke, thus blinding or obscuring the vision of those who fired it. Machiavelli cited the example of Epaminondas

(Theban general who defeated the Spartans at the battle of Leuctra in 371 B. C.) ". . . who while going to engage the enemy, had all his light cavalry trot back and forth in the front of their army; this raised such a dust that it threw them into disorder and gave him an easy victory over them." <sup>31</sup> Frontinus' statement on the event implied something else. It gave the impression that the dust indicated an attack by Theban cavalry. "Then when he [Epaminondas] had filled the eyes of the enemy with clouds of dust and had caused them to expect an encounter with cavalry, [my italics] he led his infantry around to one side, where it was possible to attack the enemy's rear from higher ground, and thus by a surprise attack, cut them to pieces." <sup>32</sup> Here was an obvious example of Machiavelli altering facts to support his theories.

Battles were an important part of any campaign--then and now. Book four of The Art of War covered the specifics of fighting a battle, most of this part being based on Frontinus and Livy. Livy was used by the former secretary as a corroborative source for those examples that dealt with the Second Punic War. Livy's real name was Titus Livius, born at Pavia in 59 B. C. and died in the year 12 or 17 A. D. He had studied Greek and Latin authors to write his monumental history of Rome. Originally a work in 142 books, only 35 have survived. Of these the first ten dealt with the period from the founding of the city in 753 to 292 B. C.; the rest discussed the period from 219 to 167 B. C., with the Second Punic War being the most important topic covered. The books were noted chiefly for their literary style, rather than strict adherence to historical fact.

When to fight was very important to Machiavelli. He urged that the

general should not be too eager to enter into a battle. It was better to wait and ". . . let his the enemy's men wait under arms for some hours until their ardor is abated and then come out of your entrenchments and engage him. . ." <sup>33</sup> The odds were even better if the commander waited until the enemy was at a moral disadvantage, that is, forcing him to engage when his religion forbade him, as with Vespasian fighting the Jews on their sabbath (70 A. D.) or forcing him to go against a superstition, as Caesar did when he forced Ariovistus, king of the Germans, to fight when the moon was on the wane (58 B. C.). <sup>34</sup>

All factors should be considered before engaging the enemy, even the direction from which the wind blew and the place of the sun in the sky. The general should have his men placed in such a manner that the wind would not be against him. A high wind against a thrusting sword lessened the effect of blows on the enemy. Similarly sun in the eyes of the troops blinded them. <sup>35</sup>

The tactical alignment of forces was of great importance. The general arranged his forces in a manner to take advantage of the weakness in the enemy's line while exploiting one's own advantages. For this Machiavelli cited Scipio's defeat (206 B. C.) of Hasdrubal, brother of Hannibal, in the Second Punic War. He reported that the decisive movement occurred when Scipio switched his best forces from the center of his line to the wings. Hasdrubal had expected Scipio's best troops to be in the center but the rearrangement meant Scipio's best troops faced Hasdrubal's worst. It became an easy victory for Scipio because Hasdrubal's flanks were crushed. <sup>36</sup>

Continuing, Machiavelli emphasized meeting the enemy on his terms

when it could not be avoided and ways in which that could be done. The example given was that of Scipio against Hannibal (Zama, 202 B. C.). Hannibal had placed his best troops in his second line, so Scipio joined together his principes and triarii

. . . so that the intervals among the principes were occupied by the triarii and there was no room left to receive the hastati; hence he had them open to the right and left and wheel off to the flanks. But remember that this method of opening the first line to make room for the second to advance cannot be used except when you have the advantage over the enemy . . . <sup>37</sup>

To further illustrate contending against a well-equipped enemy using novel tactics Machiavelli retold the battle Sulla fought against Archelaus (Pontic general) in 86 B. C. Here the problem was scythe-bearing chariots which could cut a swath of destruction through any foe's line. The solution used by Sulla was to place obstacles in front of his first line such as rows of sharp stakes and palisades. This stopped Archelaus' chariots from reaching the first line. Because Sulla had placed his light and heavy infantry in the front ranks with intervals between he was able to mount a counter-attack with his light infantry and light cavalry. This defeated the enemy. <sup>38</sup> Later in the book the use of obstacles was advocated for use against cavalry and artillery.

So far only methods of aligning troops for battle had been discussed. What of battle itself? One of the best ways to defeat an enemy according to Machiavelli was to throw him off balance and confuse his troops so they panicked. One accomplished this in various ways. A rumor could be

spread that supplies were coming up or a false show of it could be made at a distance, as the Roman general, Acilius Glabrio did against Antiochus III (Seleucid king) in 191 B. C. A slight variation on this was the action of Caius Sulpicius (358 B. C.) who mounted a number of his servants and pioneers on camp mules and made them look like a unit of reinforcing cavalry to dishearten the Gauls. Marius did the same sort of thing at Aquae Sextiae when fighting the Teutons (102 B. C.). <sup>39</sup>

What point was Machiavelli driving at with all these examples? Just this, that if panic were to be created by "false alarms" think how successful a real one could be, such as an unlooked for assault on the enemy's flank or rear. It had its limitations, however. As he stated:

. . . this is no easy matter to effect unless you are favored in it by the nature of the country; if it be plain and open, you cannot conceal a part of your forces as would be necessary upon similar occasions; but if it abounds with woods or mountains, you may lie in ambush and, when he least expects it, fall suddenly upon an enemy and be assured of success. <sup>40</sup>

Machiavelli mentioned other means of panicking an enemy; all drawn from Frontinus. The use of camels to drive off horses (used by Croesus against Cyrus the Great in 546 B. C.), the use of elephants by Pyrrhus against Roman cavalry (280 B. C.), and the Spaniards' use of ox-drawn carriages full of flax set on fire, to break through the Carthaginian Hamilcar's line (229 B. C.); all these were various expedients to break an enemy's will to fight. All the illustrations used thus far were accurately recounted by Machiavelli, the Florentine even going so far as

to follow Frontinus' paragraph order in his descriptions. <sup>41</sup>

Equally important was the avoidance of panic among one's own soldiers. The general hid setbacks from them or he set a personal example of courage for his men. In the former, the actions of Sulla were put forward by Machiavelli. On observing some of his men go over to the enemy Sulla said that it was part of a plan, thereby preventing a headlong retreat. Another time the enemy cut off and destroyed a particular unit. This same commander stated that he knew these men were traitors and were placed in that position deliberately by him. <sup>42</sup> The latter solution, that of personal example, again involved Sulla. On seeing his men retreating in the battle of Orchomenus (86 B. C.) against Mithridates he rallied his men by saying: " 'If anybody should inquire after your general, tell them you left him fighting on the plains of Boeotia.' " <sup>43</sup>

Defeats did occur, no matter how great a general so one had to be prepared. As Machiavelli saw it:

When a general would fight and secure his army in such a manner that he may be almost certain of not being routed, he should post it in a place from which he may easily and presently retreat into a safe and defensible situation, such as into a swamp, or among mountains, or into a strong fortress--places where the enemy cannot pursue him, although he may pursue them. Such was the means Hannibal used when fortuna began to become unfavorable and he began to be afraid of Marcus Marcellus. <sup>44</sup>

Often a general would be able to repair a reverse if the enemy showed

slackness in following up his victory. This was exactly what L. Marcius (actually Titus Marcius, the L. was a mistake on Machiavelli's part) did to the Carthaginians (212 B. C.) after the Romans had been defeated and the two consuls killed. As Machiavelli concluded: "Hence we see that nothing is as easy to effect as what the enemy imagines you will never attempt, and we see that men are frequently in the greatest danger when they think themselves most secure . . ." <sup>45</sup>

If reversing a defeat was not possible the general endeavored to leave the battlefield as quickly as possible without suffering further loss. That was most effectively done by splitting the army into various groups and each one taking a separate route of retreat to a predetermined meeting place. This action usually resulted in the enemy allowing him to get away for fear of dividing his own army. Other generals threw their baggage on the road to entice the foe to plunder, thus giving them time to get away. Another stratagem, related by Machiavelli and taken from Frontinus, was that of Titus Didius in Spain. This Roman general, after a long and hard-fought battle (98 B. C.) in which he sustained many casualties, buried his dead at night after the conflict was over. When the adversary saw how few of the Romans had fallen (or so he thought) the next day, he felt his own losses excessive and retreated. <sup>46</sup>

Book four concluded with some advice of a general nature to the would-be commander. It was very important that any leader of armies should have men of experience around him because they could tell not only the condition of their own army but that of the enemy's. The Florentine also thought it was important to know the foe's general,

" . . . whether he is bold and enterprising, or cautious and timid . . . " <sup>47</sup>

The importance of religion and superstition to the individual soldier could not be overlooked by the general either. Often these factors contributed to a soldier's performance. Machiavelli gave the illustration of Quintus Sertorius who took a white deer with him on his campaigns. The deer allowed him to look into the future so he would know what would happen. As Frontinus explained: "In this way he aimed to induce the barbarians to obey all his commands as though divinely inspired." <sup>48</sup> Sulla supposedly conversed with an image from Apollo's temple for the same purpose. <sup>49</sup>

Although book four had covered how to draw up an army for battle and how to defeat a potential adversary, what of those situations where one expected an attack to be made on his troops by the enemy while on the march? Book five provided the answer.

First of all, cavalry was very important. It preceeded the marching column for reconnaissance purposes. Using the marching order of the Roman legions as a model, Machiavelli mentioned that ". . . after them [the cavalry] came the right wing with the carriages and baggage belonging to it in its rear; then followed one of the legions with its carriages; next, the other in the same manner; last came the left wing with its baggage, and the rest of the cavalry followed behind everything." <sup>50</sup>

Thus if the column underwent an attack in either the front or the rear they drew off their carriages to the right or left according to the nature of the terrain. If the foe attacked on the right flank, the carriages drew off to the left and vice versa. After positioning their carriages

the Romans turned their face towards their attackers. <sup>51</sup>

Another advantage of cavalry, besides that of reconnaissance, was to ward off any attack on the main body of the army by unorganized forces or brigands. That was exactly the purpose for which Hannibal used them when he crossed Gaul to invade Italy in 218 B. C. <sup>52</sup>

To aid in any march through an opponent's country or unfamiliar terrain one had to have an exact map of the area. One could not afford to be ignorant of the surrounding countryside. Failing in that, (or to get even more detail of the terrain) one used local people from the area to guide the army through the territory or to help in making a map of it if none existed. <sup>53</sup>

Sometimes the commander got caught in a situation that he could do little to prevent. When Hanno the Carthaginian in the Second Punic War became surrounded he had to fight his way out. In order to do this his troops dug a ditch and filled it with combustible material. Once they set the fire the Romans thought it was unnecessary to guard that sector of the front. Covering their faces with their shields Hanno's men pushed through the fire to safety. <sup>54</sup>

Another situation, one that confronted Quintus Lutatius when he fought the Cimbrians (101 B. C.), was that of crossing a river in the face of the enemy. Lutatius stopped at the river and set up his entrenchments nearby, while he sent out foraging parties at the same time. The Cimbri who had followed his movements from the other side of the river set up their camp too. After ascertaining the Cimbri were off-guard Lutatius and his army crossed the river successfully. <sup>55</sup>

When fording a river it was sometimes advantageous to alter the course of it in order to draw off water from a particular spot; this made for an easy crossing. If a rapid current prevented troops from getting across, the strongest and heaviest horses went over upstream to provide a breakwater for the bulk of the army crossing farther down. Light cavalry were always the farthest downstream because their job was to pick up any infantry that were carried off by the current. In the event that the river was too wide or fast for fording or swimming armies used bridges and pontoons for crossing. Usually bridge-making materials or pontoons accompanied every army. 56

As Machiavelli recalled, Julius Caesar in his campaigns in Gaul built quite a few bridges himself. In fact he sometimes employed them as a ruse to fool the enemy. When he faced the Gallic chieftain, Vercingetorix (52 B. C.), he built part of a bridge at one location, giving his opponent the idea that he intended to cross there, while in reality he had hidden most of his men in a wooded area nearby. After Vercingetorix encamped, Caesar counter-marched his men to another point near the river and crossed without opposition. 57

Machiavelli concluded this part with a few more illustrations of stratagems while on the march. Mark Antony being sorely pressed by the Parthians (36 B. C.), had recourse to the following ploy. He had noticed that his adversary attacked him early every day and then continued to harass him throughout the day. One day he decided not to move his army until noon; the Parthians, assuming that if he had not left his camp by that time he was not going to move at all, drew off from his army and

encamped for the day. Antony when he observed this started his army on the march and continued on his way unmolested. <sup>58</sup>

At another juncture in this same campaign Antony had to figure out a way to shield his men from the Parthians' arrows that were constantly raining down on them. He ordered the various units to form testudos, that is, the second line of troops covered the heads of the first with their shields while the first has knelt down. The third line covered the second in the same manner until all the soldiers were so protected. Machiavelli forgot to say that this formation was used in one of Antony's battles, not while on the march; this was an obvious alteration of facts to suit his theories because Frontinus said of the same incident:

When Mark Antony was engaged in battle [my italics] with the Parthians and these were showering his army with innumerable arrows, he ordered his men to stop and form a testudo. The arrows passed over this without harm to the soldiers, and the enemy's supply was soon exhausted. <sup>59</sup>

Plundering after any battle was strictly forbidden by the Romans; all booty taken belonged to the public treasury. Only the commanding Consul of the army had the authority to distribute captured booty to soldiers, this being done well after the battle. Till that time all the spoils were kept and accounted for by special quaestors attached to each individual army. To ensure that the infantry did not break their ranks to loot the battlefield only the cavalry and other light-armed forces pursued their defeated enemy and the troops were expressly forbidden to plunder. As Machiavelli recorded:

Hence it came about that the public treasury was enriched by any victory, since every consul, when he entered Rome in triumph on his return from the wars, always brought with him for the common stock the greatest part of the treasure amassed through tribute and plunder of the enemy. <sup>60</sup>

The Romans also had what could be called an "enforced savings plan" for their soldiers. Each man gave one-third of his pay to the standard-bearer of his unit. This was done for two reasons: first, it forced him to save part of his money for retirement and second, it made him fight harder to defend his unit's colors. If the standard was taken by their foe and the bearer with it, they lost all their back pay. <sup>61</sup>

Book six was probably the weakest book of The Art of War, not because Machiavelli was not accurate but because he organized it more loosely than the other seven books. It covered a multitude of topics: entrenched camps, punishments and rewards for the soldiers, methods of obtaining information, how one extricated oneself from a tight tactical situation, how one kept soldiers' morale up, how one prepared an ambush, and how one ensured the loyalty of those who were of doubtful allegiance. Why Machiavelli organized the book the way he did was unclear; it seemed as if he put all the odds and ends together in one book. Most of the information contained in this book as with the previous one was taken from Frontinus except for the discourses on camps at the beginning of it. The former secretary relied on Polybius for that subject.

Camps were an integral part of the Roman art of war because they provided one thing--security from attack. Machiavelli preferred the

Roman method of encampment to the Greek, since the Roman camp had the same layout wherever it went, while the Greek camp based itself on naturally defensible positions, so as the terrain varied so did the encampment. The Roman camp had one other point to recommend it; it was simple enough so that every soldier knew exactly where he was to be when the army bedded down for the night. 62

Selection of the camp's site was very important. Machiavelli preferred being near fresh water with plenty of room to forage for food. It had to be fairly defensible too so the potential adversary did not cut them off from their supplies. Marshy and windy areas were to be avoided because these were very unhealthy for troops. Soldiers had to be restrained from all excesses to keep in top condition and should not be overmarched in intense heat or sun or allowed to drink stagnant water. If at all possible the encampment should be near a wood for shade and fuel. Furthermore, everyone had to sleep under some sort of cover. 63

To break camp the general had a trumpet sounded three times. Upon the first blast the men took down their tents and packed them. Upon the second, they loaded their gear onto their pack animals and upon the third, they began their march. 64

Occasionally a general used a camp as a help in perpetrating a ruse. For instance, Claudius Nero left his camp standing to fool Hannibal into thinking he was still there (207 B. C.). He had the same number of fires made every night and posted the same number of guards in the camp, while the rest of his army marched to reinforce another. The stratagem worked and Nero joined another Roman army just in time to defeat Hasdrubal.

(Hannibal's brother) at the Metaurus river. <sup>65</sup>

Strict discipline, according to Machiavelli, held the Roman army together; it was a system of punishments and rewards. There were a number of offenses punishable by death. Among them were abandoning comrades during battle, stealing anything from the camp, misrepresenting an action one had performed or failed to perform in battle, fighting without orders and throwing away one's arms out of fear. The most common method of execution was running the gauntlet, while in cases where whole units had broken the rules the unit was decimated, that is, every tenth man in the unit was put to death. Rewards were given for saving a comrade's life in battle, being the first to scale the enemy's wall, and for wounding, killing, or unhorsing an adversary. <sup>66</sup>

Another topic covered by the Florentine was methods of obtaining information. Sometimes the general sent with ambassadors, soldiers disguised as slaves who reported back to him the strength of the enemy's forces. At other times the commander pretended to banish a confidant who then went over to the foe. He returned later bringing with him valuable information. Machiavelli also mentioned that interrogation of prisoners yielded precious intelligence. Marius in his dealings with the Gauls who lived in Lombardy during the Cimbrian War (104 B. C.) tested their loyalty in the following manner. He gave them some letters; some were open, others were sealed. The open letters stated that the sealed letters were not to be opened by them until a certain time. Marius sent for them before that time and found that they had been opened; from then on he knew they could not be trusted. <sup>67</sup>

The next matter to which Machiavelli referred was how to make the enemy react to your strategy rather than you conforming to his. If the enemy invaded one's country the best counter move was to organize an expedition to invade his, thus forcing him to return home and defend it. This plan also had the advantage of forcing the enemy to divide his strength. The former secretary warned that that type of operation could only be done if one's own country had better fortifications than that of your adversary. Possibly Macniavelli meant Scipio's operations in Africa during the Second Punic War to be a good model for those who would try such a gambit.<sup>68</sup> If the opponent blocked the army, one used a ruse that had proved successful in the past--negotiation of a truce. While so engaged the enemy often became careless and if he did, the army often extricated itself from a perilous position. The Roman general Sulla used this stratagem twice and Hasdrubal the Carthaginian used it once to escape the legions of Claudius Nero in Spain (211 B. C.).<sup>69</sup> One other method that accomplished the same purpose was attacking the enemy's army with part of one's army. By pinning down the foe the remaining troops often slipped past.<sup>70</sup>

Not all tactics used against an opponent were directly military in nature; sometimes sowing discord in the enemy's ranks proved of value. Casting suspicion on the opposing general's advisers estranged a commander from his men sometimes. As the former secretary put it, this

. . . may be done by sparing the possessions of some particular men in whom he confides and not letting their houses or estates be damaged in a time of general plunder and devastation, or by

returning their children and other relations without any ransom. . . . 71

To support the contention Machiavelli cited the example of Hannibal's destruction of all the estates around Rome--with the exception of Fabius Maximus' property (217 B. C.). The only reason it did not work was that Fabius was smart enough to realize what Hannibal had done and transferred his title of property to the Roman state. The other example was Coriolanus' destruction of plebeian holdings (489 B. C.)--the patricians' property not being harmed at all in order to stir up class hatred between the patricians and the plebeians. 72

Obtaining victory was never easy; it was even harder when the soldiers' actions became affected by strange phenomena such as thunder, lightning near a camp, an eclipse of the sun or moon, or a series of minor accidents. Some commanders tried as much as possible to have these incidents represented as being the result of natural causes. As a result a bad omen often turned into a good one, as for instance Caesar's statement when he fell upon the shore of Africa: " 'Africa, I take possession of thee.' " 73 The statement as Machiavelli reported it was not quite accurate; according to Frontinus it was " 'I hold thee fast Mother Earth.' " 74 The secretary probably confused the former statement with the paragraph (in Frontinus) preceeding it which referred to Scipio's landing in Africa. He had said " 'Congratulate me, my men! I have hit Africa hard.' " 75 More evidence of the mixed example was the fact that Caesar did not make his statement while dismounting from a horse but made it while embarking on a ship. 76 The point Machiavelli tried to get across was clear enough

even if the facts were wrong, probably on purpose.

The secretary now changed emphasis; he switched to a discussion of military stratagems, specifically how an ambush was set up. For instance, some commanders dressed up their own men to look like the enemy. These men then devastated their own area to induce the forces of the adversary to join them. If and when they did, the trap was sprung. <sup>77</sup> This stratagem worked; it was used by Leptines the Syracusan against Carthaginian forces in 397 or 396 B. C. <sup>78</sup>

The general sometimes left his camp wide open to the enemy, making sure it was well stocked with wine and other provisions. The foe came in and more often than not drank and ate too much. The camp was then usually retaken by the commander with little loss, the work already being done by the effect of food and wine. Others mixed poison in the food and drink to overcome an enemy. <sup>79</sup>

Another general lulled the foe into a false sense of security by changing his signaling system. His scouts had always notified him of the approach of the enemy force by means of fires at night and smoke during the day. He changed the procedure by having fires burnt all day and smoke all night; upon the approach of the opponent they were extinguished by his scouts. Thus the adversary not seeing the usual warnings thought he was safe and rushed headlong into an attack; he attacked an army that had prepared to meet him. Such a ruse usually sufficed to beat the foe. The origin of this tactic was attributed to the Arabians by Frontinus but Machiavelli made no mention of its origin. <sup>80</sup>

In the pursuit of victory one dared not push the opponent too far;

one never gave him the courage of desperation. One left an escape route off the battlefield for the defeated adversary because if he was hemmed in he fought harder and caused more casualties, whereas if he retreated, it often turned into a rout. If that occurred he was easily decimated without harm to the pursuing forces, as Caesar did whenever he fought the Germans.<sup>81</sup> A similar admonition pertained to sieges. One avoided a battle as much as possible with an enemy reduced by famine because more often than not he was furious on the attack and therefore hard to stop.<sup>82</sup>

Lucullus, a Roman general used this desperation psychology to his advantage when he fought the Macedonians (c. 74-66 B. C.). A portion of his cavalry force (who were Macedonians themselves) started to desert to the other side. Realizing the situation, Lucullus ordered a general advance by his whole line; the enemy thought it was a general attack and fought the deserting Macedonians. In spite of themselves they had to fight back.<sup>83</sup> Among the problems leaders had to face from time to time was ensuring the loyalty of those whom one mistrusted. Pompey one time asked to have his invalid soldiers admitted into a certain town of the Chauci (c. 76-72 B. C.) till they recuperated. In actuality he sent a picked force of his best men who took over the city shortly thereafter to make sure it stayed allied to Rome. Publius Valerius, not sure of the loyalty of the Epidaurians, offered a pardon to all those who appeared at a specified temple outside of the city. Once the citizens were there he let go those whom he could trust and held the others hostage. Alexander the Great also employed a clever stratagem. Not being sure of the nobility

and the leading men of Thrace he took them with him into Asia (334 B. C.). In their stead he left commoners to govern Thrace; there was no revolt because the new governors owed their position to him and the natural leaders who could have sparked a revolt had accompanied him.<sup>84</sup>

Once an area had been taken over, gaining the loyalty of the subjects became paramount. Treating the conquered peoples fairly best accomplished that end. For instance, Scipio's action in Spain (210 B. C.) was a good illustration. He returned a most beautiful young woman to her father and husband untouched and unharmed. Such magnanimity to a former foe made the final conquest of Spain much easier. In a different way the Emperor Domitian by paying the local people of a certain province of Gaul (83 A. D.) for wood with which to build palisades made for that area's relatively easy conquest. Actually, according to Frontinus, compensation was paid by the Emperor to the people for crops within the palisades of a camp<sup>85</sup> but that difference was relatively unimportant. The main point still came across: one gained more from a policy of equity and justice rather than severity and harshness.

The last book of The Art of War covered sieges, how to carry on a siege and how to resist a siege. The best preparation if a siege was imminent was to stock up on essential provisions. In the event one miscalculated and the siege lasted longer than expected, provisions were supplied by allies or friends, the most convenient method being by boat provided a river ran through the city. The city of Casilinum, resisting Hannibal (216 B. C.) failed in their initial attempt to get supplies downriver by means of jars filled with food because of the Carthaginians'

vigilance; they had strung a chain across the river and thereby prevented the jars from getting through. The Romans outside the city then threw large quantities of nuts into the river which floated through the chain and they supplied the inhabitants of Casilinum for quite some time.<sup>86</sup>

Others that underwent siege reacted differently. They sought to give the impression that there was plenty of food in the town. Some threw bread over the walls to give that impression while others fattened an ox with corn and let it out of the town. When the enemy killed it he became convinced there was plenty of food in the town because there seemed to be enough to feed animals. The first ruse, practised by the Romans when they fought the Gauls (390 B. C.) was recorded by Frontinus and reported by Machiavelli correctly. The second was correct in the general idea but lacked details. In truth, there was no ox but instead a few sheep, and they consumed wheat instead of corn.<sup>87</sup> In both these cases the stratagems worked, although the first one did not dishearten the attacker enough to raise the siege while in the second example the siege was broken.

The problems for those carrying on the siege were different from the besieged. The best solution to the problems of prosecuting a siege was not to besiege a city at all if possible. One took a city at the first onslaught by a coordinated attack on it from all sides at the same time, as Scipio did when he assaulted New Carthage in 210 B. C. Sometimes the defenders repulsed their attackers even if they were in the city by fighting from buildings and roofs of buildings. The attackers forestalled that occasionally by opening the gates and allowing the foe to retreat easily or by promising not to harm anyone who carried no weapons.<sup>88</sup>

In the event the first rush on the enemy met with defeat, siege operations commenced. It then became a question of demoralizing, deceiving and wearing out the defenders. The invader wore down the foe psychologically first. Fabius Maximus let the Campanians plant their crops to deplete their stores before he besieged them (215 or 211 B. C.), thus shortening the siege and demoralizing them at the same time. Dionysius before Rhegium (391 B. C.) took a different approach. He established a truce and during that time bought all the provisions he could from that city. After he had increased his stock enough he cut off the town and it surrendered in short order. Alexander, son of Pyrrhus, employed the most clever stratagem so far mentioned. Wanting to take the municipality of Leucadia he first pacified the surrounding area, driving many people to seek refuge in that city. The town, being overcrowded, became an easy prey because there were not enough supplies for the inhabitants and the refugees too. <sup>89</sup>

There were also many ways to fool a garrison so one could take a besieged town. Domitius Calvinus (Consul in 54 and 40 B. C.) marched his army around the walls of one town in the same manner every day. The besieged took this activity for granted after awhile and their vigilance relaxed. Calvinus then stormed the city when they least expected it. Other generals dressed up some men as the enemy and once admitted inside the walls of a town immediately took possession of it. Similarly, others, after capturing or killing foragers, used their clothes to gain entrance into a fortress and opened the gates to their troops from inside. Cimon the Athenian (c. 470 B. C.) used a fire at a temple outside a city as a decoy to draw the defenders out of it. When he saw that the enemy had

left the gates wide open he marched his Athenians right into the town with hardly any opposition. 90

Luring garrisons out of cities ensured their fall in many cases. Scipio, when he fought Hannibal in Africa (202 B. C.) feigned assaults on certain Carthaginian garrisons and marched away as if he were afraid to attack them. Hannibal, upon seeing this, took his forces out of their garrisons to follow Scipio. Meanwhile, Scipio had sent his lieutenant, Massinissa, and his forces to take those garrison areas--which he did. Pyrrhus king of Epirus besieged the capital of Illyria unsuccessfully. He pretended to give up the project completely by harassing other towns in the general area, while his adversary continually sent out relief forces from the capital. Finally, Pyrrhus attacked the capital and took it after he thought it had been sufficiently weakened. 91

Sometimes an invader relied on a "fifth column" during a siege. Machiavelli related the example of Hannibal who convinced an officer of the besieged garrison of Tarentum (212 B. C.) to betray it. This officer had the habit of hunting at night because, so he told the officers at the gate, he was afraid the enemy would capture him if he went out during the day. Always returning before morning, he so contrived matters that Hannibal's men accompanied him on his return one morning. Being in disguise no questions were asked until it was too late; they killed the guards and opened the gate to the Carthaginians and that brought about the downfall of Tarentum. 92

Kindness was sometimes more effective than harshness during a siege as Machiavelli pointed out. For instance in 216 B. C. Lucius Bantius of

Nola favored Hannibal and wished to convince his fellow citizens to desert to his side. Claudius Marcellus knew of this but refused to expose him. As the Florentine said: ". . . [Claudius] treated him with so much generosity that instead of an enemy he became his firm friend. . . ."93 Not only did he receive the loyalty of Bantius but he received the loyalty of the town as well--and it held firm against Hannibal.

The great Florentine relied heavily on Frontinus for his numerous examples throughout The Art of War. Most of the time they backed up a specific point he wished to make. Polybius and Vegetius supplied the technical details about the Roman army: its organization, equipment, and training. Livy served as a corroborative source for many of the examples Machiavelli used from the Hannibalic War. Caesar and Xenophon were less important; they supplied minor details here and there.

Machiavelli was also a far better historian than most present historians have admitted. Criticized by Schevill, Anglo, and to some extent Felix Gilbert, he stood accused of willfully distorting facts. Sometimes that occurred but more often than not he reported his sources accurately and faithfully.

Though he borrowed heavily from these ancient writers and men of his own day the author expressed certain ideas that were unique. He had realized the changed nature of warfare; it implied a greater effort on the part of the state without reference to any moral code.

For when the safety of one's country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice, to kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy

or ignominious. On the contrary, every other consideration being set aside, the alternative should be wholeheartedly adopted which will save the life and preserve the freedom of one's country. <sup>94</sup>

The great Florentine emphasized the importance of infantry: "The main strength of an army lies in its infantry . . ." <sup>95</sup> This was important; although the Swiss impressed Europe with their victories at Morat and Nancy in 1476 the idea that infantry was able to withstand cavalry took awhile to penetrate. The Swiss infantry became a model for others, most notably the Germans' landsknechts but they were only part of an army and still not thought to be the dominant part. Machiavelli pointed out the increased importance of infantry and foretold a more important role for it and therein was the difference from his predecessors.

The author also proclaimed that cavalry was of secondary value: ". . . it is not right to look upon them as the main strength of an army." <sup>96</sup> Cavalry instead was to be used ". . . for reconnoitering a region, scouring roads, making incursions, laying waste to an enemy's country, tracking down their quarters, keeping them in a continual state of alarm, and cutting off their convoys. . ." <sup>97</sup> The relegation of what had constituted the heart of the offensive in war was similar to tactical views held much later. Doubtless the changes going on in cavalry at this time led him to believe this. After all armor was falling into disuse and the lance was being supplemented by sabres and pistols. From the time of the Italian Wars on cavalry never made up more than one-third of the total force in an average field army. <sup>98</sup>

Perhaps one of his most original ideas was that concerning battle. In the third book of The Art of War he gave an imaginary description of one; this had not occurred before and it represented the beginning of "literary analysis" of battle. Battle to Machiavelli was obviously of the utmost importance. As he himself said battles were the purpose ". . . for which armies are chiefly designed . . ." <sup>99</sup> However that statement did not indicate as Felix Gilbert said, ". . . the battle is the necessary climax in every war." <sup>100</sup> There were situations where one avoided a battle or achieved victory without it. The Florentine made the distinction in the Discourses:

It is useful then not to fight under the conditions in which Fabius' army found itself, or again in those in which Gaius Sulpicius found himself, i. e. when you have so good an army that the enemy does not dare to come and oust you from your fortified position; or when the enemy is in your country, but without having the footing there that would guarantee provisions. In this case the course adopted is useful for the reasons Livy gives when he says: 'he was unwilling to try his fortune in an engagement with the enemy so long as time and his adverse situation were daily making the enemy's position worse.' <sup>101</sup>

By the same token he emphasized that one did not avoid battle if the enemy desired it. "The point one has to bear in mind here is that a general who proposes to remain in the field cannot avoid battle if the enemy is determined to force one on him at all costs." <sup>102</sup>

Much criticism was levelled at him by Sir Charles Oman, the British military historian, and by Professor Pasquale Villari, his Italian biographer, for the tactical formations put forward in The Art of War. The former secretary relied heavily on infantry, following the Roman example. He took the Roman legion as a model and modified it according to the times:

I would take some of the Roman arms and armor, some of the German; half of my men would be armed with one and half with the other; for if out of every 6000 infantrymen, 3000 were provided with swords and shields like the Romans, and 2000 with pikes and 1000 with harquebuses like the Germans, it would be sufficient for my purpose . . . 103

He then gave a general idea of the tactical formation: "I would place my pikemen either in the front ranks, or where I thought the enemy's cavalry was most likely to make an impression; I would post the others so as to support the pikemen and push forward when a way was opened for them." 104

That type of formation came directly from the Swiss whose pikemen Machiavelli greatly admired. By gearing his recommendations to maneuverability he wished to make the Swiss system more adaptable and flexible. 105 Furthermore, basing one's infantry on the Roman legion was not without precedent. For example, the battle of Fornovo in 1495: the Spanish defeated the Venetian and Milanese mercenaries with Roman legionary tactics. Barletta (1502) was another instance where Spanish use of Roman tactics triumphed over a modern French army.

When they engaged to fight, the Swiss pressed so hard upon the enemy with their pikes that they soon opened their ranks; but the Spaniards under the cover of their bucklers, nimbly rushed in with their swords, and fought them so furiously that they slaughtered the Swiss and gained a complete victory.<sup>106</sup>

This statement seemed to contradict the Florentine's emphasis upon pikemen. This was more apparent than real. The chief value of pikemen was in being able to hold off cavalry and lessening the effect of its charge,<sup>107</sup> while infantry armed with swords and bucklers nullified pikemen if used in conjunction with cavalry.<sup>108</sup>

If Machiavelli was criticized for poor tactical ideas by Sir Charles Oman, he was even more criticized for his lack of appreciation of firearms and artillery by that author. In his words, the former secretary ". . . thought that artillery was going to continue negligible, that the day of cavalry in battle was quite over, that infantry was going to continue in very huge units, like the legion, and that the pike was destined to be put out of action by short weapons for close combat . . . In every case his forecast was hopelessly erroneous."<sup>109</sup>

This was simply not true. He was aware of both artillery and small arms. The phrase used so often to denigrate Machiavelli came from the Discourses: ". . . Artillery is useful to an army provided it be backed by valour such as was displayed of old; but without this, it is of not the least use against a valorous army."<sup>110</sup> The real point of that statement was the attainment of moral superiority over one's enemy-- the will to conquer versus technological competence. In the larger sense,

man was a constant no matter what innovations occurred in weaponry. As he explained in his Discourses: "Hence if men do not, as individuals, display their valour, it is not due to artillery, but to bad methods and to the weakness of modern armies, for since they lack valour as a whole, they cannot display it in part." 111

How decisive was artillery in battle? Book three of The Art of War provided part of the answer. In his mock battle the action proceeded as follows: "The enemy's artillery has discharged its volley, but their balls have gone over the heads of our infantry without doing them any harm; but to prevent their artillery from firing a second time, our valites and light cavalry endeavor to make themselves masters of it; a body of the enemy post themselves before it, so that the artillery on both sides is become useless." 112 The question that was legitimately raised was whether the artillery could not get off more than one barrage and why did it have so little an effect on advancing troops? Machiavelli answered this query by saying that having once drawn up an army for battle there was no real way to avoid being hit except to rush the adversary's artillery, "but they must not do so in close order because the suddenness of the attack will prevent the artillery from firing more than once, and when your men are thinly drawn up it cannot do much damage among them." 113 Casualties lessened even more by soldiers "availing themselves of such cover as the site offers or by lying flat on the ground when a volley comes. Experience, however has shown that this is unnecessary, especially as a defence against heavy artillery; for with heavy artillery the range cannot be so nicely adjusted. Hence either the fire is too high, and

does not get you, or it is too low and falls short of you." 114

There was a basis for the relative ineffectiveness of artillery as stated by Machiavelli. As Oman said of the battle of Flodden (1513): ". . . there can have been only a few rounds fired on either side--as was so often the case in battles of this age--Machiavelli (it will be remembered) lays stress on the brief share of artillery in general actions." 115 At the battle of Ivry (1590), again as Oman stated: "As usual in such battles, the artillery was not allowed much time to play its part, as the cavalry charged at once, to avoid further casualties." 116 These actions supported Machiavelli's views and obliterated any unfavorable opinion of Oman on the Florentine's concept of artillery; Oman even contradicted himself and proved that Machiavelli understood the limitations of his age's weaponry. Furthermore this state of affairs lasted for quite awhile. Oliver Spaulding (Colonel, U. S. Artillery) and John Wright (Colonel, U. S. Infantry) reported in their book Warfare that as late as the seventeenth century: "Artillery was cumbersome, and the number of guns was small; the battle was usually decided before they had fired many rounds." 117

Another factor involved was the guns themselves. The French Army of 1494 had guns that weighed 6000 pounds and required twelve horses to draw them, while the smallest were two-wheeled guns that fired a ball not much larger than that from the arquebus. Between these two extremes the French possessed everything that was needed for either siege or field. 118 The larger pieces were clearly unusable in the field due to lack of mobility. Guns were still more effective against fixed defenses--and

this for one very important reason. Those who worked on these fieldguns were still hired specialists. They did not transport their own artillery; this was done by hiring local people.<sup>119</sup> This made for gross inefficiency, especially in battle. Those serving the guns faced a real predicament, neatly phrased by Machiavelli: "Again when armies come to hand-to-hand conflict, it is as clear as the day that neither heavy nor light artillery can hurt you. For if the enemy place it in front, you capture it; and, if he puts it behind, it hits his own folk before it hits you; while on the flanks it cannot do you so much damage but that you can go and get it, so that in the end it all comes to much the same thing."<sup>120</sup>

There were other reasons why artillery was ineffective. The more mobile, two-wheeled artillery of the French had a relatively flat trajectory as indicated by Machiavelli in the previous paragraph. The danger did exist that one could hit one's own troops if they carried out an advance in front of their own guns. The degree of elevation that was possible made for a difference of only a few degrees. Though the trunnion made the elevating or depressing of a gun feasible, it still remained a slow, hard process to re-aim the gun.<sup>121</sup> That problem in combination with re-setting the field-piece after firing and re-loading meant there might be precious little time to loose two or three accurate salvos at an advancing enemy. In fact, mobile, rapid-firing cannon did not make their appearance until the seventeenth century.

Machiavelli then clearly appreciated and understood the limitations of artillery. It was also the case with small arms. Speaking of small arms the Florentine voiced the opinion ". . . that small pieces of cannon

and shot from harquebuses do more damage than heavy artillery." 122

The preceeding indicated a very early stage in the development of small arms which made it all the more remarkable that the former secretary understood their importance. As he remarked, the arquebus ". . . is a new, but a very useful weapon." 123

That Machiavelli knew the importance of the arquebus became evident in his Militia Ordinance of 1506. In it he required that every group of one hundred men should have ten arquebusiers. As Allan Gilbert, the Machiavelli scholar, remarked, ". . . This seems not to have been a small proportion according to the custom of the time." 124 Furthermore in The Art of War, its author included 1000 arquebusiers in his ideal battalion of 6000 men. Here the proportion was one in six rather than one in ten, an indication that he thought much the same as his contemporaries. 125

One of these contemporaries was the Spanish Army's "Great Captain", Gonzalo de Cordoba (1453-1515) who learned quite quickly how valuable small arms were. His army when it first came to Italy in 1494 consisted of crossbowmen, men-at-arms and light cavalry but after his defeat at Seminara he changed the organization to include arquebusiers, formed and equipped with the latest firearms. Each arquebusier had a bullet-pouch, match, cleaning materials, ramrod, and gunpowder in small tubes on a bandolier. This gave the Spanish soldier more mobility and facility in loading his weapons. The difficulties of aiming the weapon limited the weapon's accuracy to 100 yards. 126 Its ultimate range approximated 300 yards. 127

Still the emphasis in the Spanish army was not solely on this new weapon. Half of each Spanish army had pikemen, one-third of the men had short swords or javelins and one-sixth of the force had arquebuses. <sup>128</sup> Interestingly enough that was the same proportion of arquebusiers to infantry that Machiavelli had proposed in The Art of War. This combination of pikeman and arquebusier (not the proportion but the existence of pike and shot together), was to last for about 200 years until the invention of the socket bayonet at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The swordsman disappeared from most armies by the second half of the sixteenth century. Musketeers did not really outnumber pikemen in an army until the time of Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632). <sup>129</sup>

Basically the use of arquebusiers confined itself to a defensive role. Entrenchment and the art of fortification were used extensively by Cordoba, the object being to entice the foe into attacking the Spanish army while it held a strong defensive position. This proved to be effective. At Cerignola in 1503 the Spanish had positioned themselves behind vineyards and hedges and when the French and Swiss advanced Cordoba's force cut them to ribbons. The battle ended with a Spanish counter-attack that captured the French artillery train. This occurred again at the battle of Marignano (1515). Well-entrenched and well-placed Spanish artillery and small arms' fire decimated the Swiss pikemen employed by the French. Thirty separate French cavalry charges failed in the face of withering Spanish firepower. At Bicocca (1522) the entrenched artillery and arquebuses of the Spaniards drove the Swiss from the field. In the decisive battle of the Italian Wars (Pavia, 1525), when it appeared as though the French artillery would

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CONTAINS  
NUMEROUS PAGES  
WITH MULTIPLE  
PENCIL AND/OR  
PEN MARKS  
THROUGHOUT THE  
TEXT.**

**THIS IS THE BEST  
IMAGE AVAILABLE.**

annihilate the Spanish, the advantage vanished when a French counterattack blocked their own artillery and prevented it from firing. After the Italian commander, Pescara, redeployed 1500 Spanish arquebusiers the battle was all but over. They poured a devastating fire into the enemy that disorganized him. In the ensuing *mélée* the French were crushed.

These battles illustrated the importance of the arquebus to defensive warfare; its offensive potential was as yet unclear. Machiavelli, concerned as he was with the offensive, saw no real reason for the defense to be superior to the offense, given the difficulties of maneuver, re-loading, and accuracy. It should be remembered that The Art of War was written in 1519 and published in 1521. Bicocca and Pavia occurred after the book was published and systematic introduction of firearms did not begin in the French army until after 1525.<sup>130</sup> This was six years after he wrote The Art of War and two years before his own death. Considering the state of flux that existed during his lifetime the Florentine did quite well to realize the importance and limitations of fire weapons in general. There were few trends for anyone, let alone the former secretary, to determine the future of tactics and weaponry. For instance the arquebusiers could not stand alone against cavalry and their rate of fire was slow; pikemen were still needed to protect them.

One measure of Machiavelli's importance was his considerable subsequent influence on military theory. In his own day The Art of War was well received. Two Florentine editions appeared, one in 1521, the other in 1529, followed by six others before the end of the sixteenth century. The first French translation came out in 1546 and the first English edition

in 1560. The first Latin and German translations were printed early in the seventeenth century. Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, the first plagiarized edition of The Art of War appeared as the Tratado de re Militari by Diego de Salazar. It was published at Valencia in 1536 and substituted Gonzalo de Cordoba for Fabrizio Colonna as the military expert. <sup>131</sup>

With the publication of the book, Instructions sur le faict de la Guerre (1548) the dissemination of the great Florentine's ideas began. Originally attributed to Guillaume de Bellay the work was actually written by Raymond de Beccarie de Pavie, sieur de Fourquevaux (1508-1574). Both the organization and the substance of this work were borrowed from Machiavelli. This book became one of the most influential and widely quoted of its day. <sup>132</sup>

Direct connection between Machiavelli and other military writers often was hard to prove but Frederick the Great (1712-1786) flatly admitted his debt to the Florentine. Though stating that ". . . Machiavelli's maxims cannot be applied to modern politics" <sup>133</sup> due to the changed nature of Europe, Frederick did think he had value when speaking of military matters. As Frederick put it: "As for the manner in which a prince ought to make war, I agree entirely with Machiavelli. Indeed, a great king ought always to assume command of his troops, and to regard the camp as his place of residence. This is what his interest, duty, and glory require . . ." <sup>134</sup>

There was also agreement on another point: that of mercenary soldiers. Frederick preferred not to use them.

Experience has shown that the national troops of a state are always the most serviceable. . . I agree with Machiavelli that a state is generally but ill served by mercenary troops, because they can never act with as much fidelity and courage as men who fight for their possessions and families. It is particularly dangerous for a prince to allow the people to languish in a state of inactivity and to grow soft and effeminate at a time when the fatigues of war harden and discipline their neighbors. <sup>135</sup>

Another great military leader showed traces of the former secretary's influence. The French general and Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), relied on him for "broad principles" rather than advice of a technical sort. Their greatest similarity was in the emphasis upon the moral factor in war. In addition, it must be noted that among the books that the Emperor carried with him on campaign were those of Machiavelli. <sup>136</sup>

The great Florentine then was not without influence on subsequent military practitioners and theorists besides being unique and highly regarded in his own day. All in all he was a much better observer than his detractors will admit. Artillery was correctly seen as an addition to the existing military system, not as the more dominant arm it became later. He was right for his own time when there was very little indication as to how important gunpowder weapons were to become. The rapidity with which they changed, grew, and spread seemed to disprove the former secretary's prescriptions, those reasons being largely responsible for his relative obscurity today. If the level of technology had stayed the same Machiavelli's ideas would have been more influential. Without a doubt though, he was definitely the first of the modern military theorists.

## APPENDIX I: MACHIAVELLI'S CRITICS

The main problem in dealing with Machiavelli as a military theorist was that most of the books and articles written on him discussed his political theories. There was no real discussion of him as a military theorist. Sometimes as with Sydney Anglo's book, Machiavelli: A Dissection, (1970) the comments on him as a theorist were tied in with a general discussion of his political and historical ideas. In Anglo's case it amounted to a constant debunking and criticism. He regarded the Florentine as being in ". . . an antique strait jacket." <sup>137</sup> This applied to military matters meant that the former secretary had no appreciation of fire weapons. When dealing with an original thought such as Felix Gilbert's idea that the "decisiveness of battle" as presented in book three of The Art of War was important and a break with the past, <sup>138</sup> Anglo dismissed it offhand. In his opinion the battle as presented in book three might be unique but it was not significant. <sup>139</sup>

Sir Charles Oman was another harsh critic. His History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century (1937) took Machiavelli severely to task. His disapproval centered on fire weapons much as did Anglo's. The Florentine also stood accused of failing to be prescient enough in regard to these developments. He " 'backed the wrong horse' in almost every instance" <sup>140</sup> and "in every case his forecast was hopelessly erroneous." <sup>141</sup> In addition there was much carping at the former

secretary's emphasis upon the ancient Romans as an example to be emulated along with a general blast at Machiavelli's ideas of when, how, and under what conditions a battle ought to be fought.

Professor Pasquale Villari's Life and Times of Niccolo Machiavelli, which first came out in 1892 and in an English edition in 1898, was not as critical of the great Florentine's military theories as either Anglo or Oman. He pointed out that the basis of the secretary's proposed reforms, the Roman legion, remained the model for subsequent reformers for some time. He also noted that Machiavelli's ideas on cavalry were very similar to that of a modern tactician (c. 1900). <sup>143</sup>

However, Villari voiced the same attitude as Anglo and Oman in regard to firearms, that is, Machiavelli did not realize and point out their importance. <sup>144</sup> Villari offered an explanation for this by saying the secretary had a very narrow experience of war. In summation he stated, ". . . Machiavelli understood soldiers and their weapons as they had been before 1512; and it was these he tried to bring to perfection by examining the conditions under which he knew them and by studying the art of war as practised by the Romans." <sup>145</sup>

## APPENDIX II: BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

The best way to approach the problem of whether Machiavelli was indeed a prescient military theorist came from an investigation into the Florentine's experience in war and his career in general. Wallace K. Ferguson, Professor Emeritus at the University of Western Ontario and scholar of the Renaissance, in his book Europe in Transition, 1300-1520 (1962) provided valuable background on the period. Likewise, Professor Lewis W. Spitz, another eminent authority in Renaissance and Reformation history, contributed background detail in his The Renaissance and Reformation Movements; Volume I: The Renaissance (1971). Both these books gave excellent overviews of the era.

More specifically Roberto Ridolfi's The Life of Niccolo Machiavelli, published originally in 1954 and translated into English in 1963, provided the essential data on the great Florentine's life. This differed from Villari's biography in that it was just a straight biography. It did not offer interpretation or discussion of his literary works or the ponderous Renaissance background that occupied one-third of Villari's work. Ridolfi's book offered a simple clear narrative; therein was the strength of the biography.

Another biography that received much comment and attention was Giuseppe Prezzolini's Machiavelli. In this book Prezzolini, a former professor at Columbia University, stated that Machiavelli meant ". . . war is therefore a necessary and vital moment in the life of a nation. In

our own words, the armed forces of a country are the expression of the general capacity of a nation. In them the moral, technical and intellectual forces of a people are fused and put to the test of survival." 146 This followed a more traditional interpretation of him as the original Italian title indicated, Machiavelli Anticristo (Machiavelli Antichrist). In fact that was the tenor of the whole book, that Machiavelli was anti-Christian, and perhaps even more interesting, Prezzolini saw nothing wrong with being anti-Christian; he gloried in it.

Machiavelli's military background was exceptionally well-covered in Charles C. Bayley's War and Society in Renaissance Florence: the "De Militia" of Leonardo Bruni (1961). This monograph traced the development of the idea of a citizen's militia for the Florentine Republic. Bayley, a mediaeval military historian, proved that the most original of Machiavelli's thoughts, a citizen's militia, was not original with him after all. He pointed out that the idea was common before the Florentine secretary's own time; he merely applied successfully an already existing idea. There was also extensive background on Machiavelli as one of the directors of the war effort against Pisa. Bayley's book was most helpful in that aspect. It stands as a work of erudite scholarship.

Felix Gilbert, the best living Machiavelli scholar, attempted a reappraisal of him as a military theorist in E. M. Earle's Makers of Modern Strategy (1943). His article, "Machiavelli: the Renaissance of the Art of War", portrayed the former secretary as a man trying to cope with the very real changes warfare was then undergoing. His main idea was that the Florentine was the first of the "moderns" to see warfare in a new light, that is ". . . he was convinced that the

validity of any special analysis of military problems depended on a general perception, on a correct concept of the nature of war." 147

A shorter article, no less important however, was Allan Gilbert's "Machiavelli on Fire Weapons" in Italica (1946). Gilbert, professor emeritus of Duke University, was another eminent scholar of Machiavelli. He has translated some of the latter's works in addition to writing an erudite volume on The Prince entitled Machiavelli's Prince and its Forerunners: the Prince as a Typical Book de Regimine Principum. (1938).

The article on fire weapons by Gilbert compared some of the great Florentine's ideas on arquebuses and artillery to the practices of the military leaders of his time. The argument for Machiavelli as against Oman was well presented. Gilbert's conclusion was that the Florentine realized the value of these weapons--and their limitations but that in the final analysis their effectiveness depended upon the men using them.

Any study that dealt with Machiavelli's military thought could not fail to be familiar with his ideas on mercenaries. Two general works, Joseph Jay Deiss's Captains of Fortune: Profiles of Six Italian Condottieri (1966) and Michael Mallet's Mercenaries and their Masters: Warfare in Renaissance Italy (1974) provided background on the topic. Both were by popular historians with Mallet's work standing a bit above Deiss's for clarity besides being an excellent introduction to the topic. Deiss's book on the other hand was more specific in that it gave six biographies of some of the lesser Condottieri. The main thrust of Mallet's work was that Machiavelli doctored some of his accounts of battles fought by mercenaries. The author said this was because Machiavelli's

. . . humanist preoccupation with a national militia as the solution to the problem of national strength blinded him to the more realistic alternatives of the time, while his limited experience of a few notorious condottiere failings blinded him to many of the realities of warfare in fifteenth century Italy. 148

The effectiveness or the ineffectiveness of the condottieri and warfare in Renaissance Italy came from general histories of warfare. To ease oneself into the maze of Renaissance warfare, Field-Marshal Montgomery's A History of Warfare (1968) was a simple, clear, concise recounting of the complex military moves on the Italian peninsula. Another general work with some coverage of the pike and arquebus period was Preston, Wise and Werner's Men in Arms (1956). Richard A. Preston and Sydney F. Wise were both military historians who taught at the Royal Military College of Canada while Herman O. Werner taught at the United States Naval Academy and specialized in military and Canadian history. Though there was little comment on Machiavelli the book did give a fine general overview of the era.

For more technical information Theodore Ropp's War in the Modern World (1959) was the answer. Ropp, a professor of history at Duke University and a well-known military historian, made clear the advantages and disadvantages of Renaissance weapons. He pointed out that it was hard to maneuver, aim and fire artillery rapidly--all factors which tended to confirm Machiavelli's theories. He also thought, as Mallet did, that not all mercenaries were bad and that the Florentine exaggerated a bit on that point. Spaulding, Nickerson and Wright's Warfare: A Study

of Military Methods from the Earliest Times (1925), was in the same class as Ropp's book, that is, information of a technical nature. It was a more detailed narrative, however.

A good general history of warfare for this era was Lynn Montross's War Through the Ages (3rd edition, 1960). Montross, former official historian for the United States Marine Corps, did a very good job on the Italian Wars. The usefulness was not so much in the interpretation as in the presentation of the material. Though based almost entirely on published sources the battles were described well in a couple of paragraphs or so with the pertinent tactical information included. The book was concise and precise.

The best treatise by far on Renaissance warfare in Italy was F. L. Taylor's The Art of War in Italy, 1494-1529 (1921). The book was a brilliant survey having won the Prince Consort Essay Prize in 1920 and covered the development of strategy, tactics, infantry, cavalry, artillery, and the art of fortification during the Italian Wars. It delineated the problems of the developing fire weapons of the time quite well.

Of Machiavelli's own works the Allan Gilbert edition of The Prince and Other Works (1941) was a newer and better translation than that of Luigi Ricci. It was also of more value because it included some of Machiavelli's letters which contained references to the military happenings of his time.

As for the Discourses the best and most recent translation (1950) was by Father Leslie J. Walker. It contained extensive notes which were of immense value in clarifying and cross-referencing some of the more

difficult and puzzling aspects of the Florentine's thought. In addition the Penguin edition (1970) contained a well-done critical introduction by Bernard Crick.

The Library of Liberal Arts' The Art of War (1965) used the old Farnsworth translation of 1775, but has an excellent new introduction to it by Neal Wood. He made clearer the sources of Machiavelli's thought and provided a fine rundown on the former secretary's influence on military thought up to the present day.

Machiavelli's most frequently used source for The Art of War, Frontinus' The Stratagems and the Aqueducts of Rome, was translated by Charles E. Bennet in 1925. The work itself grouped together numerous examples of successful ruses used by the ancients against various enemies. There was little attempt at style in the work but it was well-organized, the first book covering matters to be done before battle, the second book covering measures to be used during and after battle, the third book covering ruses during siege operations, and the fourth book covering other important matters such as discipline and justice which were not properly called stratagems but merited attention nonetheless. Frontinus was a fairly reliable source and knew something of war having had a military command himself as a provincial governor in Britain sometime shortly after his first consulship in 73 or 74 A.D. More than that could not be said of his military experience because very little information survived on his life in general. It was known, however, that he subdued the Silures, a British tribe, while he was in Britain.

Another of Machiavelli's prime sources, Vegetius, had little or no military experience. Vegetius' book The Military Institutions of the Romans, translated by John Clark (1944), must be used with care. He wrote the work in a period of military decline sometime after 378 A.D. probably between the years 383-392 A.D. At this time the Roman army was in sorry shape. Vegetius wrote the book to inspire the Roman emperor, Valentinian III, to reform the army and restore it to its former effectiveness and glory. As a result Vegetius described the Roman legions in an ideal manner, not as they actually once were. Nor did he take account of the changes the army had gone through over the centuries. Therefore, he was somewhat suspect. Given the social and cultural environment of the time Vegetius' ideas of reform were impractical. However his book became influential in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as a textbook of military science. Machiavelli used it as a guidebook for military reform.

The Histories of Polybius, translated by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh in 1889, was yet another prime Machiavelian source. Polybius' Histories contained the most accurate military information of all the former secretary's sources. He had had considerable military experience accompanying the Roman Commander, Scipio Aemilianus, in the final operations against Carthage in 150 B.C. Of all the ancient historians he was the best military historian.

Machiavelli also borrowed some information from Livy, Rome's most famous historian. His The War with Hannibal, translated by Aubrey de Selincourt (1965), was part of his monumental work, The History of Rome. As a military historian Livy was generally correct but he had

a tendency to omit details or report the wrong information. He did not really check his sources as well as he might have thus making him less accurate than Polybius. Moreover he tended to be more of a literary, narrative historian rather than a totally objective one. At times he never let facts get in the way of a good story. Also, having had no military experience he relied exclusively on secondary accounts and had no real way of determining the truth of his information.

The last of the historians that Machiavelli used to some extent was Xenophon. Xenophon, perhaps most famous for his book The March Up Country which recounted how he conducted a fighting retreat through Asia Minor, was very knowledgeable on military matters. This was not only true because he was a general but also because he wrote clearly and precisely. The Cyropaedia (The Education of Cyrus), which was translated by Walter Miller (1914), covered the career of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire. The book was not as important for military history or detail as it was for the ideas it might have given Machiavelli: such as hunting being good training for war and Xenophon's discussion of mock battles.

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MACHIAVELLI AS A MILITARY THEORIST

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), most widely known for his political theories as expounded in The Prince, was also a military theorist. In his own time he was held in high esteem by his contemporaries for his book, The Art of War. So manifest was this that a Spanish writer, Diego de Salazar, plagiarized the work. His subsequent influence was not inconsiderable either; both Frederick the Great and Napoleon read the treatise.

Because he lived in an era of rapid technological change, he seems to be largely ignored by modern writers. These writers, such as Sydney Anglo and the British military historian, Sir Charles Oman have overlooked him because some of his ideas became invalid shortly after his death with the vast improvements in weaponry. Nevertheless, Machiavelli's military ideas still merit attention for he perceived more clearly than his contemporaries the nature of the warfare of his day. Further, he tried to improve on it by setting those realities within the framework of ancient military customs and practices.

Machiavelli saw these events more clearly because his experience as the Secretary to the Committee of Ten gave him a unique opportunity to observe the military and diplomatic practices of his time. While in that post he went on numerous diplomatic missions, one of the most important being his mission to Cesare Borgia (1502-1503) where he observed both the diplomatic and military doings of the latter. Later, due to his responsibilities as secretary, he personally participated in the direction of the siege operations that Florence prosecuted against Pisa. He implemented and carried out the policy of drafting

a citizen's militia which was instrumental in bringing about the fall of that city in 1509.

. In addition to practical experience of war, Machiavelli found time for scholarly study after he lost his job in 1512. From this came his most famous works: The Prince, The Discourses on Livy, and of course, The Art of War. In these books he reflected much of the intellectual attitude of his time, that is, a reverence amounting at times almost to worship, of the classical authors. In The Art of War he drew on Frontinus, Polybius, Livy, and Vegetius for many of his military ideas and examples. Frontinus and Livy, for instance, supplied him with the military examples of various ruses the ancients had used to defeat their opponents. Vegetius and Polybius, on the other hand, gave Machiavelli ideas on how to train men, how to arm them, and how the Romans set up their camps. A great deal of this Machiavelli reported correctly. Only occasionally did he distort or garble his information deliberately.

The former Florentine secretary's thoughts on the future of warfare in his day showed his appreciation of the weapons which were then coming into general use. His most vocal critic, Sir Charles Oman, denied this. Objections withstanding, Oman was wrong. He had stated that Machiavelli did not correctly assess the value of muskets or artillery. In The Art of War there was some comment on these weapons but in The Discourses, the former secretary's position on these new instruments of warfare became clearer. In that book it was evident that the Florentine knew muskets and artillery were useful. The only

thing that could be said to be unclear was the extent to which these fire-weapons were revolutionary. Even that only proved one thing, that it was very hard to predict the future of weaponry in an era of tremendous technological change and modification.

Machiavelli did say however, that artillery was merely an addition to the existing military system not an entity which all by itself would change conventional strategy and the nature of war. For his own time Machiavelli was correct. Also, he thought that no matter what developments occurred in fire-weapons the essence of war would not change, that is, man would still be superior to blind technology and that technical drawbacks could be overcome.