



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## The Book of Peace

Green, Karen, Mews, Constant J. , Pinder, Janice, de Pizan, Christine

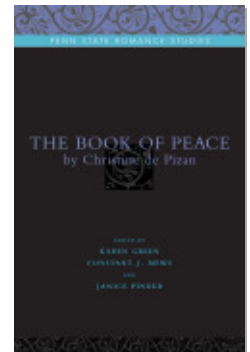
Published by Penn State University Press

Green, Karen & Mews, J. & Pinder, Janice & de Pizan, Christine.

The Book of Peace: By Christine de Pizan.

University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/292>

## PART 3



Here begins the table of the third part of this book, which speaks of the good government of the people and the polity in relation to three other virtues: clemency, liberality, and truthfulness.

1. The first chapter praises the virtue of clemency and kindness in a prince.
2. How the people must be included in peace.
3. Concerning the strength and power of France when she is at peace and united within herself.
4. Concerning the evil wrought by bad men who are powerful and have authority.
5. More on the bad lord, on the damage he does and the evil that comes from it.
6. How it brings great honor to a prince to keep all the estates of the realm in their proper places.
7. How the people should be treated gently by the good prince.
8. Examples of this same subject from Holy Scripture.
9. Several signs of his love that God has shown to the people.
10. Here follows a letter addressed to the people which speaks for their improvement and instruction, showing by examples how rebellion and common unrest toward one's lord is displeasing to God.
11. How it is not fitting that the common populace should be given offices and ranks in the city.
12. Concerning the peril of giving the common people more authority than is suitable for them.
13. How to ensure that the nobles remain at all times practised in arms.

14. Recalling the peril and evil that is and may be a consequence of civil war, in order to guard against falling into it.
15. The way in which a prince should treat the common people in order to guard against presumption and cause for rebellion.
16. Examples of the virtue of clemency in a good prince from the wise King Charles.
17. More on King Charles, how by his wisdom, clemency and kindness he constantly acquired lands and friends.
18. How the wise King Charles loved knowledge and honored scholars and learning.
19. Some lessons that God sent to cruel princes.
20. How cruelty comes from pride.
21. Concerning the punishments that God sent to proud princes.
22. Here begins consideration of the virtue of liberality, about its usefulness and how it is fitting for a prince.
23. Concerning the virtue of generosity and its use.
24. Concerning greed and the evil that comes from it.
25. What can be said in condemnation of the vice of greed.
26. On liberality: concerning the good order which the abovementioned king kept when hearing petitions.
27. Concerning the fine works the abovementioned king commanded, and how he made the people prosper.
28. Concerning the great burdens and commitments the said King Charles made in expenses and outlays, and how in spite of this, everything was fairly provided for in the matter of payment and expenditure.
29. Concerning the ways the said king had of honoring foreigners.
30. Concerning the largesse of the king and his discreet way of giving gifts.
31. Here begins considerations of the virtue of truthfulness and how a prince should possess it.
32. Here it is shown how wrong it is that the vice of lying is as common as it is in all ranks.
33. Concerning the ordering and manner of fair eloquence in a prince.
34. More concerning the ordering of speech according to the science of rhetoric.
35. In praise of economy in speech.
36. How it ill becomes a prince to be enraged and to speak furiously.
37. What can be said in condemnation of voluptuousness in a prince and being too given over to pleasures of the flesh.
38. Further on this matter and praise for the institution of marriage.

39. Here begins a brief consideration of some of the virtues already mentioned, supporting them with authorities, beginning with justice.
40. How it behooves those who are descended from noble families to show it in their actions.
41. The great evil that can come to a prince through the vice of laziness.
42. How the prince should readily communicate with those around him.
43. How the prince should not favor flatterers.
44. How there should be a settled order in the actions and way of living of the prince.
45. About charity that pertains to a prince.
46. Some teachings of Aristotle.
47. In conclusion, concerning the maintenance of friendship.
48. The last chapter and the end of the book.

Here begins the third and last part of this book, which speaks of the good government of the people and the polity, in relation to three virtues: clemency, liberality, and truthfulness.

## 1

### **The first chapter praises the virtue of clemency and kindness in a prince**

Clemency makes people not just more honest but more safe, for it is an ornament for rulers and a most certain security; the power of tyrants is wretched and brief. Seneca, book *On Clemency*.<sup>1</sup>

Excellent and most feared prince, we proceed in this third part in the same way as before: with the subject of peace. Here we treat of suitable ways for a prince to govern his people, and we shall speak first of clemency, which is the fifth of the seven virtues that I have said are appropriate for you.<sup>2</sup> The property of this virtue, says Seneca in the passage quoted above, is that it gives to princes not only honesty but also very great security, and it is

1. Summarized from Seneca *De clementia* 1.11.4 (Hosius, 221): “Clementia ergo non tantum honestiores sed tutiores praestat ornamentumque imperiorum est simul et certissima salus. *Quid enim est, cur reges consenuerint liberisque ac nepotibus tradiderint regna*, tyrannorum execrabilis ac brevis potestas sit?”

2. Cf. *Corps de policie* 90r, and *Prudence* 20v.

the fitting ornament and sure salvation of emperors. And by contrast, the accursed transitory power of tyrants is displeasing. So you can see what a propitious thing it is for every good prince to be clement and humane. Jesus Christ himself gave an example in his own person of how clemency and graciousness ranks high among the virtues, throughout the whole course of his life—the life that is an instruction for every good Christian; and for that reason the Gospel praises it. This virtue makes a man kind and gracious, as well as compassionate and courteous in deed and in word, causing him to desire the good and advancement of everyone. He should want to pursue it to the best of his ability.<sup>3</sup> Of all the virtues, this is the one that most attracts friends, distant and close, to a great lord, and that most keeps him in peace and harmony with all. Your good father, our present King Charles VI, himself shows that it causes a man to be more welcome in the sight of all. Because of the impression that everyone has of his great sweetness and kindness, and because he wants to be everyone's friend and to harm nobody, nothing is desired more by his people than his noble presence. This virtue causes hatred of tyranny, cruelty, any sort of wickedness, and greed—all vices that are most ill-suited to a lord. If any lord had them, he could not be loved, since they are contrary to human nature. Is it not a pleasant thing for a subject, of whatever degree or estate, to know that his lord is so gracious that he will not disdain to hear his humble request, or appeal for redress, but rather will kindly and patiently hear him out, and then answer him sweetly? Certainly, this kindness makes the subject love his lord so much that he would die for him if need be. Such ample graciousness earns renown everywhere. O! It is a noble virtue in a great lord—one that costs him nothing, and yet may be worth much to him. Certainly this clemency was not lacking in our good King Charles, your grandfather whom we mentioned before, in whom all kindness and gentleness abounded, as those still living who served him well remember.<sup>4</sup> About this we shall speak more fully later, as befits any good example—and so that the virtues of such a valiant and cultivated prince may not be forgotten.

3. In *Prudence* 268v Christine repeated a definition of clemency, inspired by Seneca: "Clemence est une vertu qui s'encline et s'accorde de legier a dispenser, amolir ou mitiguer la rigueur de la loy et toute cruauté; et aussi est clemence une benignité et doulçour que doit avoir le souverain envers le subgiet." Here she does not repeat this definition verbatim but certainly follows its sense. She also discussed clemency as a virtue needed in a prince in *Corps de policie* 1.16 (Kennedy, 27–29; Forhan, 30–31).

4. Christine devotes chapter 1.24 of *Fais et bonnes meurs* (Solente, 1:64–68) to the clemency and benign character of Charles V.

## How the people must be included in the peace

Mercy and truth have met each other,  
justice and peace have embraced.<sup>5</sup>

Peace is the whole work of virtue,  
the greatest peace the result of efforts.  
Prudentius, *Book on the Fight of Virtues  
and Vices*.<sup>6</sup>

Turning now to consider the general rank and estate of the people, in respect of this virtue of clemency and its relation to peace, we observe that clemency is quite indispensable. It is, after all, utterly impossible to keep a large community in check, and to prevent certain of them running into all manner of fault—whether by simplicity, bad counsel, or some other cause. Human nature is in itself inclined toward all the vices, when discretion and reason do not intervene; and such reason is usually weak in the common populace, because they do not receive much instruction in virtue or in how to tell good from evil. There are many, therefore, that are little better than beasts, as far as reason is concerned. If a physician were engaged to cure the whole body of a sick man, but he refrained from healing the feet and legs or other minor limbs, one would say neither that the treatment was good nor that the whole body was healthy. Similarly with the political body of this kingdom, whose head is the prince: let the common people also be ministered to with the cure that is this glorious peace!<sup>7</sup> Certainly at least some have been poorly advised and gullible, urged on by one among them in particular—very iniquitous and worthy of punishment—to exploits against your good self, and to other mischief. Nevertheless, for the good of the whole body, it is time for the words of David quoted above in Latin to apply: that mercy and truth have met, and justice and peace have embraced. In this case this means that, although it is true that many evils deserving heavy punishment have been committed, nonetheless it is fitting that mercy should come to meet this

5. Ps. 85:11.

6. Prudentius *Psychomachia* 769–71, ed. M. P. Cunningham, CCSL 126 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966), 176: “Pax plenum uirtutis opus, pax summa laborum, / pax belli exacti pretium est pretium que peridi, / sidera pace uigent, consistunt terrea pace.”

7. Willard in *Paix* (Willard, 201) believes Christine took this metaphor from John of Salisbury *Policraticus*, via the translation by Denis Foulechat (1372). She makes extensive use of the same metaphor in *Corps de policie*: for example, at 3.1. and in *Long estude* 5493–94.

truth: so mercy should soften the rigor that normally applies in these cases. And this is why the text goes on to say that justice and peace have embraced. Bless that embrace! And how necessary it is for us to take note of what our next authority says: “Peace is the fulfillment of every virtue, and the end and sum of all our works and labors. The stars have their movements ordained by good proportion, concord, and peace, and so have elements and affairs here below.” From this it is clear that without peace we cannot live as we ought to, nor according to virtue.<sup>8</sup> And thus, since all our labors are directed toward having peace, as our authority quite correctly observes, may every effort be made so that peace is upheld among us creatures that reason—just as we have seen that it is among God’s other creatures.

## 3

**Concerning the strength and power of France when she is united within herself at peace**

I determined that the whole world could not stand in the way of a united Gaul.  
Quoted in the *Deeds of Julius Caesar*.<sup>9</sup>

We believe that no one wise has known about the republic who did not think that Gaul had to be greatly feared. Cicero, *Book about the Consular Provinces*.<sup>10</sup>

I beg that you do not accustom your hearts to such great wars nor turn violently against the healthy strength of your fatherland. Vergil, *Aeneid*.<sup>11</sup>

8. This passage may contain an echo of Dante *Monarchia* 1.9 where Dante quotes the passage from Boethius that Christine uses below at 3.6.

9. Paraphrase of Caesar *Commentarii belli Gallici* 7.29.6, ed. W. Hering (Leipzig: Teubner, 1997), 120: “atque unum consilium totius Galliae effecturum, cuius consensui ne orbis quidem terrarum possit obsistere.”

10. Cicero *De provinciis consularibus* 33, ed. A. Klotz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1919), 351: “nemo sapienter de re publica nostra cogitavit iam inde a principio huius imperii, quin Galliam maxime timendam huic imperio putaret.” Christine omits a phrase that she does not translate, suggesting that she has taken it from an anthology in which the text is attributed to Cicero rather than to Tullius. It is possible that she thought Cicero, “prince romain de tres grant savoir,” was a different person from Tullius (his more common name in medieval literature).

11. Vergil *Aeneid* 6.832–33 (Ribbeck, 523).

Since it often happens that self-love or envy will turn a man away from judging fairly anything belonging to another, or from publicly praising it—no matter how good or beautiful the thing may be—it seems that when foreigners do assert that a country other than their own is magnificent, it should be believed and held to have great authority, especially when they are people who have a high opinion of themselves. Even though the Romans looked down on all the nations of the world, and deemed nothing valuable beyond themselves, the account of the deeds of Julius Caesar quoted in Latin above testifies that if France were united and without internal division it would be strong enough to resist anyone. Similarly Cicero, a Roman prince of very great learning, asserts that all who are competent to assess a country's strength have judged France to be more formidable in war than any other country, and greatly to be feared.

O noble crown prince, when foreigners attribute such vigor to the French if they are united, you, whom this matter touches more closely than any other living person except your father, must strive to ensure that the accident which can prevent France from attaining such excellence is eliminated once and for all—and that is civil war—which in itself is more harmful than anything else. But even worse: its continuation can bring on an acceptance of perpetual war such as we see in Italy, which is a very great misfortune, and effaces all of that country's glory. Accordingly, Vergil says to you princes in our next quotation: "Do not become accustomed by war to turning your forces against the vitals of your own country"; that is, do not exert yourself to destroy your subjects by force of arms, because you are then making war on yourself. And do you know what Tully says about such quarrels? He says, by God, that the poison of civil wars was first ordained to humble the great: and that those who become proud through too long a period of prosperity, since there is no one stronger than they are to oppress them, fall out among themselves and oppress each other.<sup>12</sup> Ovid too says that an excess of glory is often harmful.<sup>13</sup> Plato held that princes and other governors must take care lest discord spring up among them. This is no less perilous, he says, than it would be for sailors to contest among themselves who is best to steer their vessel, even as it is tossed in the storm.<sup>14</sup> Let it please you, good prince, to note the words of the wise men and follow them. As Aesop said, there is nothing better than sane counsel, nor anything worse than false exhortation if it is believed.<sup>15</sup>

12. Unidentified.

13. Cf. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.654 (Anderson, 74).

14. Latini *Trésor* 2.85.3; also quoted in John of Salisbury *Policraticus* 5.11 (Webb, 1:331).

15. Cf. Aesop's fables, as translated by Phaedrus: *Fabulae Aesopiae* 1.20, 25, ed. L. Müller (Leipzig: Teubner, 1879), 9, 10.



### Concerning the evil that is brought about by bad men who are powerful and have authority

Injustice bearing arms is most savage.  
Aristotle, *Politics*<sup>16</sup>

O heavy fate, every time a wicked  
sword is joined with savage poison.  
Boethius<sup>17</sup>

Aristotle says above that there is nothing more horrible than injustice armed with power; and Boethius then confirms that sword and venom combined make hard companions. Since the wickedness of corrupt men can express itself more fully in powerful men than in others, by causing many evils, there is nothing worse than when a bad man—full of venom, cruelty, and belligerence—is powerful. On this subject, and in order to deal with various matters that have to do with the one goal of peace, we shall speak of the reasons why wars or rebellions break out between subject and lord. Lest it ever be suggested or imagined that I sought in this book to trample on subjects or peoples, in order to support the nobles by some special favor, or otherwise to prefer any of the estates over the others, it seems fitting that I say something about the wrongs a lord might do to his subjects. This may indeed have happened; or it may *appear* to have happened, or at least *could* come about.<sup>18</sup> That is, while true justice and reason may permit wars that are undertaken for a just cause—to those whose duty includes war, such as sovereign princes—surely this right is limited in the case of lords just as it is for subjects. Let me illustrate, briefly, with a simile. Let us imagine a powerful lord: one so detestable, malicious, and wicked that his inclination is to afflict all lands if he could, and to use nothing less than the full extent of his power to challenge the rights of his neighbors. This man, because he feels fortified by his possession of land, people, or allies, or by the faith that he puts in money, will impose many extortions, or will take issue with other princes or with some of his own subjects. He will seek to usurp their

16. *Les "Auctoritates Aristotelis"* 15.10; cf. Aristotle *Politica* 1.2.1253a26 (AL 29.1:6): "*gravissima enim iniustitia habens arma.*"

17. Boethius *Philosophiae consolatio* 2.m.6.16–17 (Bieler, 32): "*heu grauem sortem, quotiens iniquus/additur saeuo gladius ueneno!*"

18. Christine hedges her criticism of a "potential tyrant" with so much caution that one cannot help feeling that she was afraid of suffering the effects of some tyrannical wrath herself if she spoke too clearly about the person she had in mind—surely, in the context, John the Fearless, who had recently left Paris.

property; and to achieve these things he will make war in order to terrify everyone. Such a man will afflict all his people in different ways, and will not take the advice of wise men. Instead he will go his own way, to his great discredit, to exact vengeance—or otherwise impose on and injure all and sundry. For these reasons, and because of his many assaults on foreigners and fellow countrymen, and because of his foolishly undertaken wars and wicked deeds, his noblemen will be killed and trampled underfoot. Their lands will be destroyed and laid waste, and cities and castles will be brought down by various enemies. Nor will he allow anyone to reproach or gainsay him, on pain of death. To put it briefly, he will not fear God or His punishment for anything he may do. O! but Solomon spoke of such men and their downfall in *Proverbs*, in the person of Our Lord, when he said: “You have despised counsel and have not wanted to be reproached; I will laugh at your destruction and will not have any regard for you when sudden disaster befalls you.”<sup>19</sup>

So the evil prince—from whose kind may God preserve us—will be cruel in all things, and bloodthirsty and vengeful. Because of these horrible faults, countless evils will spring up and overrun him and his country. He, nevertheless, will be so obstinate and so given over to evil that he will care nothing about his own ill deeds or those of others. O! how opposed to such a one is what Brutus the Constant says: a prince must realize that he lives, as it were, in the midst of the world; he is neither born nor ordained to be a lord for himself, but is established in that office for the benefit of all.<sup>20</sup> Sallust says too, speaking of sailors, that a man who is raised to a position of power, as lords are, must always show himself through virtue to be worthy of greater dignity than he has, which is to say that a prince’s virtues should outweigh any power he may wield.<sup>21</sup> But, continuing the case against the bad prince, just as a king’s virtues ensure that he will continue to be loved in his country, and give him peace of mind, the vices of a bad prince will torment him with fear. Concerning this Horace says: “How can the evil man comfortably enjoy delicate and costly meats at his table, when a sword hangs by a thin thread over his head?” We should understand this to mean that the punishment of Our Lord can fall suddenly on the wicked.<sup>22</sup>

19. Prov. 1:25–26.

20. Cf. Cicero *Brutus* 254, ed. E. Malcovati (Leipzig: Teubner, 1970), 77.

21. Not Sallust, but *Bellum alexandrinum* (*Corpus Caesarianum*) 16.5, ed. A. Klotz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1927), 12.

22. Cf. Horace *Carmina* 3.1.17–19 in *Opera*, ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1995), 67: “dstrictus ensis cui super impia/cervice pendet, non Siculae dapes/dulcem elaborabunt saporem.”

### More on the bad lord: on the damage he does and the evil that comes from it

Woe to the man through whom scandal comes. In the Gospel.<sup>23</sup>

About these bad princes of whom we have been speaking, it must be said that, for all those innumerable ills that come about because of them, there is yet worse to come: for just as one good thing brings another, the same happens with bad things. To keep up his wars, about which we have spoken, and to reward his followers, counselors, and helpers in these wicked deeds, how can the bad prince find a way to obtain money and keep financing it all? This is no small expense, and there is no fortune so great it would not be used up. There is no way other than inflicting many burdens and exactions on the people and heaping wrongful taxes on them—which would leave him fearful that they might rebel or that their favor might be lost, from which worse could come. But what can he do? In God’s name, he can find out where the rich are, and especially what can be got from them. It will be put about that some of them are traitors, that others have been party to some bad contracts, that still others have deserved death—and there will be enough prepared to testify to it. In such diverse ways, by disguising cruelty, pillage, and tyranny under the colors of justice, money will be found, no matter who is disinherited or ruined in the process.<sup>24</sup> And thus the evils and persecutions that the wicked, tyrannical lord can contrive take countless forms and use different means. According to their inclinations some favor one way, others another.

For some might perhaps be bad in a different way: by seducing the wives, daughters, or female relations of their men by iniquitous means, whether by force or threats, or by promises or money, or by fear of their tyranny, putting their husbands in prison, and so on.

Still others foolishly believe their wicked flatteries without question, and in this instance bring about the death of people without cause or justice, or

23. Matt. 18:7: “vae homini per quem scandalum venit.”

24. As well as being reminiscent of the fate of Jean de Montaigne (*Religieux de Saint-Denis* 4.267–77), this passage may well contain an implicit criticism of the proposals for raising money put forward by the Estates General at the beginning of 1413. Certain wealthy members of the administration were accused of corruption, and it was proposed that the money needed to defend France against the English be extracted from them. See *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 4.745–69, and Alfred Colville, *Les Cabochiens et l’ordonnance de 1413* (Geneva: Slatkine-Megariotis, 1974), 167–72.

at least with little reason, both in public and by having drownings or killings done in secret so they will not be talked about. Or they find excuses by oblique means to justify someone's death or destroy them through enmities if they are a hindrance to them, in order better to attain their goals, as many have done.<sup>25</sup> Thus it is written of several tyrants, such as Denis the Tyrant and Julian the Apostate, and King Antiochus who pretended to be on a pilgrimage to the temple in order to rob it; this is commonly their method, to cover their deeds with dissimulation and pretend that their motives are good.<sup>26</sup> Another, full of covetousness, pretended that the gods had appeared to him and, as he claimed, charged him with building a temple of gold and precious stones, and by that ruse stripped his men of all their goods. It was to such a man that Saint Augustine said: "How is it that you want to have all good things, and wish nothing bad, and yet you care nothing about having a good soul—though in fact you have no other possession but that?"<sup>27</sup> So in various ways were propagated the doings of those lawless tyrants, for whom the authorities cited earlier spoke their words. But of those and similar people who cause such scandal and misfortune, the Gospel quoted above says that—alas for them!—God will not leave them unpunished. To return, though, to our first topic of subjects and princes: suppose that men find themselves with such a lord, who with his wars and exactions has caused them much damage, leaving their children, sons, brothers, or parents dead, and themselves disinherited and the country destroyed; and suppose they feel that he is inclined to carry on with this madness and that in all regions they will be hated and reproached because of him, and condemned never to be without war; and suppose that his obstinacy continues from bad to worse. I ask you, if these people and all the nobles rebelled against such a lord (given that they would feel so oppressed, and driven to extremes)—would it be surprising? I would say further that such rebellion would not be sufficient punishment: rather, the women, who otherwise could not harm him, ought

25. During the spring of 1413, a number of people had been killed by drowning or other means as a result of the actions of the crowds who took over the streets and appeared to be led by members of John the Fearless's household. See *Religieux de Saint-Denis* 5.55–59, and Colville, *Les Cabochiens*, 184–96, 327–29. Among these, Jacques de la Rivière, brother of the count of Dammartin, was the son of Bureau de la Rivière and Marguerite Auneau, both of whom Christine had praised in her writings, and who Suzanne Solente (1:lxxxiv–lxxv) suggests were among her sources in *Fais et bonnes meurs*.

26. Cf. John of Salisbury *Policraticus* 8.6, 8.21–22 (Webb, 2:256, 381, 392–93). These examples of arrogant rulers were also included in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.27. Solente believes that Christine drew these from the *Flores Chronicorum* of Bernard Gui (Solente, 1:76n2).

27. Latini *Trésor* 2.122.13, quoting Augustine *Sermones* 29, ed. C. Lambot, CCSL 41 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1961), 375.

to pray devoutly to the blessed soul of the good lady Judith that she beg God to deliver his people from this cursed Holophernes.<sup>28</sup>

## 6

**How it brings great honor to a prince to keep all the estates of the realm in their proper places**

Certainly it is a great sort of happiness to achieve a dominion that is free of conflicts. 2nd example.<sup>29</sup>

It is certain that a republic is happy, which shines adorned with many citizens. Cassiodorus<sup>30</sup>

After what we have said about bad princes—whose paths God grant that you, Louis of France, noble youth, may avoid and flee utterly, as I firmly hope that with God’s help you will—let us return to our main subject. The authority above affirms what a very happy thing it is to achieve rule without contention, meaning that when a prince knows how to exercise his rule without discord among his subjects, it is a sign that he is wise and virtuous. And for this reason Cassiodorus also says, most aptly, that a realm shows itself fortunate if it is resplendent and endowed with many citizens: it is a sign that a city is in good condition, and great, rich, and well governed, when one sees very many illustrious burghers there. These words lead us to consider that through good government, and by keeping peace among his people, a prince increases and maintains the happiness of the realm. And with regard to citizens, the city of Paris is without doubt peopled with good, loyal, and wise ones, as they have demonstrated at this time. As for the nobility of the

28. Christine devotes a chapter to Judith in the *Cité des dames* (2.31) and also refers to her in the *Mutacion de Fortune* and the *Ditié* dedicated to Jeanne d’Arc. Judith’s story is also told in John of Salisbury *Policraticus* 8.20 (Webb, 2:377). Discussing the imperial themes and symbols used by Cola di Rienzo, a contemporary who influenced Petrarch and whose letters were therefore quite likely known to Christine’s father, Frances Yates comments that he often illustrates the overthrow of a tyrant with the example of Judith. This suggests a possibility, so far unexplored, that there was some influence on Christine’s prophetic political writings from this source. Frances Yates, *Astraea* (London: Routledge, 1975), 14–15, 37.

29. Cassiodorus *Variae* 8.2 (CCSL 96:300). “Magnum profecto felicitatis genus optinere give contentionibus principatum” Christine’s text is corrupt, but she translates it correctly.

30. Cassiodorus *Variae* 6.11 (CCSL 96:239): “Constat felicem esse rem publicam, quae multis ciuibus resplendent ornata.”

land, this most noble kingdom shines and is endowed above all the countries of the world with four things: the first is the high dignity of its princes, who all share the blood of the royal line; the second is the valiant knighthood and estate of the nobility; the third is the distinguished clergy, active in all kinds of scholarship, especially in Paris; the fourth, the worthy and rich burghers in many cities, especially in this one. And, thank God, all the estates—along with the people in general, simple though they be—quite rightly recognize, with great loyalty and love, obedience and respect, one single head: the King. O indeed, what power could oppress or trample underfoot such a body, if it is united, with none of its limbs separated? The head that is the king, the shoulders and upper parts that represent the princes and lords, the arms that are the knights, the sides that are the clergy, the loins and belly that are the burghers, the thighs that are the merchants, the legs and feet that are the people.<sup>31</sup> Without doubt, if this body—God protect it!—holds together well, it need fear nothing. Each of the estates must in good faith take pains to persevere in this way. God grant that it may be so! On this matter, it seems that Boethius spoke to this noble body, as if he meant to write: “O, you men of France, you will be so blessed if you desire it: that is, if you are governed by the love that holds up the heavens and without which nothing is stable.”<sup>32</sup>

## 7

### How the people should be treated gently by the good prince

How great is the force of friendship and the harmony in which many exist can be seen from disagreements and discord. Tully, the book *On Friendship*.<sup>33</sup>

It seems as if Tully was prophesying about the present time when he spoke the words above, which mean that we can now see how great is the power of friendship and concord over the evils that have come our way through dissension and discord. So it is necessary, if we are to avoid falling once more into the terrible misfortunes that discord has led to, for us always to live in peace from now on. To return to what has been said above—that even the

31. See 7 above for previous use of this metaphor.

32. Boethius *Philosophiae consolatio* 2.m.8.28–30 (Bieler, 36): “O felix hominum genus, / si uestros animos amor / quo caelum regitur regat!” This passage was also quoted by Dante in *Monarchia* 1.9.

33. Cicero *De amicitia* 23 (Simbeck, 55): “id est minus intellegitur, quanta vis amicitiae concordia que sit, ex dissensionibus atque ex discordiis percipi potest.”

common people should be included in this holy union—it may appear to some, considering the criminal exploits and offences many of them have been involved in, that they are not acceptable. For this reason it seems desirable to me, through examples, to touch on how the prince should have the common people under his protection, even though they have ever been, through their very nature, inclined to go astray through foolish credulity and bad counsel. We have examples of this in Holy Scripture, where God, notwithstanding the great errors into which the Israelites fell on several occasions, did not wish that they should be brought down too far, but struck with bitter afflictions the princes who sought to oppress them and treat them so very harshly.<sup>34</sup> From this it is to be presumed, since these things must be for the instruction of princes, that it would not please Him at all for His Christian people, who must be more acceptable to Him than the Jews were then, to be trampled upon or beaten. Nonetheless let no one believe that I am referring to the principal malefactors from whom the recent sedition has come—perverters of others and sowers of encouragement to evildoing; it is not my intent that they be spared, but that they be punished according to the law.<sup>35</sup>

8

### Examples of this same subject from Holy Scripture

That power is safe which imposes  
measure on its own strength. Guido in  
the Introduction to his *Summa*.<sup>36</sup>

It says above that in the end, firm and secure power is that which is restrained in its use of force. These words, which are addressed to princes and powerful men, mean that the common people of whom we are speaking ought to be spared and dealt with leniently: because, although it is well within the power of the lord to punish his people if they have done wrong, it is better for his rule if he behaves moderately than if he is very vindictive. In other words, it is better for a prince to be loved<sup>37</sup> for not being harsh, than to be greatly feared for being cruel. To give an example of this, in the way of God being

34. Cf. 2 Kings 13:22–24.

35. Willard in *Paix* (Willard, 203) observes that Louis of Guyenne had refused to pardon the leaders of this revolt and concludes that Christine was trying to avoid antagonizing him.

36. Not Guido Faba, but Valerius Maximus *Facta et dicta* 4.1.ext.8 (Briscoe, 238), also quoted in John of Salisbury *Policraticus* 8.20 (Webb, 2:273).

37. Willard corrects *B* (“tenir”) from *P* (“ame”). This does seem to be a genuine case of a slip by the copyist of *B* (Christine?), anticipating the “tenir” later in the sentence.

displeased at the people being oppressed, there is King Pharaoh, of whom it is written in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of the book of Exodus that because this king greatly subjugated the people in slavery God sent ten plagues to Egypt. The first was of waters turned into blood; the second was of a numberless host of frogs everywhere, even in the houses; the third was of a kind of flying creature that is called *culex* in Latin; the fourth a great quantity of large flies; the fifth the death of the dumb animals; the sixth swellings and ulcers on people; the seventh a prodigious hail that killed the beasts; the eighth a kind of flying worm called locusts that laid waste all the fruits of the earth; and the tenth was the death of all of the first-born sons of every household.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, God showed King Rehoboam that He does not wish too great a burden to be imposed on the community, when that king had replied to his people's request for a diminution of the taxes imposed by his father that his smallest finger was bigger than his father's back had been, and that he would treat them more harshly than his father ever had. When that happened the greater part of his people, following the counsel of some young people and hotheads, rebelled against him and he was left with little, as it is written in the twelfth chapter of the book of Kings.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Amalek, who wanted to destroy the people, was undone by Joshua, as it is written in the seventh chapter of the book of Exodus.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the prophet Balaam, who had come from far away to curse that people, was reproached by his ass who spoke, as it is written in the twenty-second chapter of the book of Numbers.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, with the help of God the people destroyed the king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, who were attacking them, as it is written in the twenty-first chapter of the book of Numbers.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, six thousand men of the people killed a hundred and twenty thousand of their adversaries, as it is written in the eighth chapter of the second book of Maccabees.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, when Sennacherib was besieging one of the cities of Israel, a hundred and eighty thousand men were struck down in one night by divine punishment, as it is written in the nineteenth chapter of the fourth book of Kings.<sup>44</sup>

38. Exod. 8:1–11:10. Christine has omitted the ninth plague, a great darkness such as could be felt.

39. 3 Kings (= 1 Kings) 14:21–31; 1 Kings 12.

40. Exod. 17:8–16.

41. Num. 22:22–35.

42. Num. 21:21–35.

43. 2 Macc. 8:10.

44. 4 Kings (= 2 Kings) 19:35–36. The reference to Maccabees, Sennacherib, and the plagues of Egypt are all to be found in John of Salisbury *Policraticus* 8.21 (Webb, 2:381).



### Several signs of his love that God has shown to the people

If we inspect the origin of friendship,  
we see that it draws its essence from the  
supreme nature which is God. Cassio-  
dorus, *Book of Friendship*, Chapter 11.<sup>45</sup>

If we look into the origins of friendship, we find that it draws its being from the highest nature, which is God. So says Cassiodorus, and it is true: even more so in relation to the love that God has shown to the common people, which is a great demonstration that He loves the populace, given that it is not to be thought, as we have already said, that He loves his Christian people less than he did the Jews. So we shall speak of some instances of the love he showed the people as contained in Holy Scripture. God gave His people on Mount Sinai His law written by His own finger on tablets, as it is written in the thirtieth chapter of Exodus.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, He brought the people out of Egypt and out of slavery to King Pharaoh; and as they wandered through the desert to the Promised Land He gave them a column of fire to lead them by night and a column of cloud to lead them by day, and to protect them from the great heat, as it is written in the fourteenth chapter of Exodus.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, the Red Sea was divided by Moses' staff and the people passed dry-shod, and the Egyptians who were following them were all drowned, as it is written in the fourteenth chapter of Exodus.<sup>48</sup> Then, because the water in the desert was bitter, Moses sweetened it by throwing a wooden staff into it, so they and their beasts could drink, as it is written in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, when the people were crossing the desert to the Promised Land they were fed for forty years with manna that came down from heaven. And because some of them complained, wanting to eat meat, God sent them fields covered in quail, as it is written in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus.<sup>50</sup> Then,

45. *P* supplies "capitulo." Not Cassiodorus, but Peter of Blois *De amicitia Christiana* 9, ed. M.-M. Davy, in *Un traité de l'amour du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1932), 144.

46. Exod. 20:2–17.

47. Exod. 13:21–22.

48. Exod. 14:21–31.

49. Exod. 15:22–25.

50. Exod. 16:13–35.

because the people had run out of water, Moses struck a rock with his staff and water gushed out, as it is written in the forty-second [chapter] of Exodus.<sup>51</sup>

Similarly, the people wandered in the desert for forty years without their clothes deteriorating in any way, as it is written in the book of Deuteronomy.<sup>52</sup> Then, when the people were about to enter the Promised Land, because they had no vessels to cross the water, the river Jordan divided and the lower part flowed downstream and the upper part stopped, and so the people passed across dry-shod, as it is written in the third chapter of Joshua.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, in the battle against the enemies of the people before Gibeon, the sun stopped in its course at Joshua's request, as it is written in the tenth chapter of Joshua.<sup>54</sup>

## 10

**Here follows a letter addressed to the people which speaks for their improvement and instruction, showing by examples how rebellion and popular dissent against a lord offends God<sup>55</sup>**

It is not sufficiently safe to trust honeyed words. Aesop, *Fables*.<sup>56</sup>

O all you people, from all parts of the world, whose state is normally changeable, surely led on by sensuality and scarcely checked by reason: although Terence says that speaking the truth engenders hate, do not on that account think of silencing it!<sup>57</sup> For Aesop, quoted above, urges you to the contrary—and you should believe him—when he says that believing sweet words is a risky business. What madness can ever move you, for whatever reason, to an intention to rise up in rebellion against your superiors, and to contemplate bringing down or destroying the nobility, which you could never do without disaster turning back onto you? It is great ignorance

51. Exod. 17:5–6; there is a scribal error in the text where xl replaces xv.

52. Deut. 8:2–4, 29:5.

53. Josh. 3:15–16.

54. Josh. 10:13–14.

55. Willard, *Paix* (Willard, 204), notes that Christine sometimes inserts letters into her work and claims that a selection of this one has been printed in P. Viollet, “Quelques textes pour servir à l’histoire politique des Parisiens au xve siècle,” *Mémoires de la Société de l’Histoire de Paris et de l’Île de France* 4 (1877): 168–70.

56. Gualterus Anglicus *Esopus* 9.11–12, in *Les Fabulistes latins*, ed. L. Hervieux (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1893–99), 2:320.

57. Terence *Andria* 68, ed. A. Fleckeisen (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898), 5: “obsequium amicos, ueritas odium parit.” Possibly accidentally omitted as a rubric.

blinding you, when you do not see that nobility is such a strong bond that warring kings would make peace in advance to help one another, so they would not be destroyed when you rebel. And rightly so, as it is a natural thing that God has willed and always tolerated. For although all men are indeed equal in terms of creation and birth, still you must know that, in those who are of noble lineage, by long habit of difference in rank the practice of a distinct kind of greatness of spirit and conduct from that found in others becomes second nature. Or it should do so, for those who fail in this regard dishonor their ancestry.<sup>58</sup> This is shown by the beasts and birds: some kinds are noble, others not. For this reason, in the estates to which God has elected you, where each can do good and achieve his salvation if he pleases, you must be humble beneath the rule of your superiors, and loyally do your work, each according to his ability. And this trains you into doing good and living in peace. Especially you people of France, who have better reason to do this than any people in the world, since you are the people to whom God, as a sign of love—as the Bible says of the people of Israel, to whom he made many gifts—has always provided naturally with kings one succeeding another, without the disruption of foreign lords, who would have oppressed you or forced you to follow other customs than the noble French ones, as happens in many places; and under these kings of most benign temperament you have been, and continue to be, treated very gently and without tyranny, and sincerely loved. Because of this—and so you will know never to believe any advice to act, speak, or plot in groups, in public or private, against respect for royal majesty—it is good to remind you by instructive example how God dislikes dissension by subjects against their superiors and princes. He never fails to demonstrate this in the end, by grievous punishments for those who do it, and Holy Scripture shows several examples of this.

First, because the people of Israel protested against their leader Moses for leading them into the desert according to God's will, saying that he had taken them there to die of hunger and be deprived of meat to eat, God sent serpents that killed a great number of them as a punishment for this dissension, as it is written in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus.<sup>59</sup> Also, because Moses took a long time when he went to receive the law of God on Mount Sinai, the people took to idolatry and turned away from the law of God; for that reason, when Moses returned twelve thousand men were killed, as it is

58. Compare Christine's phrase "ou doit avoir ou ilz folignent ceulx qui y failent" with Oresme's "ce est assavoir que noblesse de lignage est non forligner de nature" (*Politiques* [Menut, 153]).

59. Num. 21:6.

written in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were three that led the people astray the most, envied their prince his rule over the people, saying that they were holier and worthier to govern than he was. There was a great commotion because of their declarations, and the people were divided. For this sin the three were punished by the ground opening before them, and they were taken alive down into hell with their accomplices, as it is written in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers.<sup>61</sup> O, what an example for wicked conspirators, from whom harm and sedition comes! They should not doubt that God, who is constant, will punish them sufficiently, even if He delays. Yet the foolish people were not chastised by this example; rather, because those we have named were thus killed, murmuring and sedition against the leader Moses built up again and the foolish people said that he had killed them. Fear of their tumult caused Moses and Aaron to flee to the temple, for which crime God would no longer hold back His punishment, but sent fire from heaven which killed fourteen thousand men on the spot, as it is written in the sixteenth chapter of Numbers.<sup>62</sup> These examples and many others that could be told, which I have not included because it would take too long, all make it clear—and they are not alone, all the books are full of them—that it is always a bad course for the people to conspire against their rulers or their royal estate. Even in this kingdom of France, if you would take notice of how it has turned out for them every time they have rebelled against the nobles, whether by bad advice or by their own will, I am sure that you will find it is they who end up in disarray, since God cannot tolerate such an outrage. Solomon says aptly in relation to this: “Let your eyes see in front of your steps” which is to say look ahead before you undertake such serious actions.<sup>63</sup>

## 11

**How it is not fitting that the common populace should be given offices and ranks in the city**

Do not exalt those who nature teaches  
should lie humble, for a rain, swollen  
stream flows stronger than a permanent  
river. Walter, *Alexandreis*.<sup>64</sup>

60. Exod. 32:28.

61. Num. 16:1–40.

62. Num. 16:40–50.

63. Prov. 4:25, also quoted in *Latini Trésor* 2.57.1.

64. Walter of Châtillon *Alexandreis* 1.86–88 (Colker, 11).

Therefore, most noble prince, considering that the general inclination of the common populace is hasty, with little reflection and needing little pretext for action, without their seeing even as much as beasts the evil that can result for them when they have some complaint that incites and stirs them up to commotion and tumult, such as claiming that they are badly governed and would be better so (though still it is not pleasing to God that they should be down-trodden or unreasonably burdened)—taking into account all of these things we have touched on above, how can one manage them prudently, dispelling any fear of their foolish uprisings, while not harming or wronging them? For it is willed by Our Lord that we should support them, and furthermore their trades and labor are necessary to the realm. It seems to me that the authority quoted above in Latin teaches you the first reason they should remain in the estate to which they belong. It says plainly, and on their behalf, that you must not raise up those that Nature ordains to be lowly, for a little stream that bursts its banks is more violent than a great river. To elevate common people too much—a dangerous thing—is to yield to them responsibilities or ranks greater than those that belong to them. They should not have authority of any office, nor prerogative of any government of city or town—things that belong to worthy burghers from old families, from degree to degree according to the capacity both of the offices and of the people, as Tully testifies in his book. There are good reasons for it to be done like this. For what sorry misadventure would have instructed a tradesman, who has all his life done nothing but earn his living through the work of his arms or his hands, without moving outside his workshop, nor having mixed with jurists or experts in matters of law and justice, who will not have seen honor nor know what intelligence is, nor have learnt to speak in an ordered way with fine and clear arguments, nor acquired other knowledge of things necessary for people who are fit to be placed in government? Yet such a fool, who hardly knows his paternoster nor how to conduct himself except in low taverns, aspires to govern others.<sup>65</sup> God! There is nothing more calamitous than government by such people, for they commonly have little sense—and fools are naturally proud, however insignificant they are. For how do you think it will be when such an ill-favored wretch suddenly thinks to become a master? There is no more perverse imposition than when he screws up his face with a pike in his hand, swears horribly, threatens everyone, and believes he is doing his job well. What a sight it is to see the deliberations of their assemblies! It would be laughable, were it not so perilous, to hear them make their speeches where the most foolish speaks first, with his

65. Cf. Cicero *De officiis* 1.4.14 (Atzert, 6).

work-tray in front of him. It looks like a real play, with parodies of characters, for that is what they base their expressions and speeches on, because they have heard them in these farces that are performed, thinking that this is how one should pronounce and give weight to one's words: one foot in front of the other, arms held by the sides. There is nothing to equal it! No real craft, there: willfulness does all the work. And from a foolish judge comes hasty judgment; here conclusions are drawn without advice, from which very bad effects follow.<sup>66</sup> O! how terrible it is to see emerging from that diabolical assembly countless common people, following each other like sheep, ready and armed to do all sorts of evil as soon as one makes a start—certainly a wild boar's fury or cruelty was never comparable—without knowing what they want. And when they seize on something, or someone, nothing curbs them and they show no respect for prince or princess, lord or master, nor to their neighbor or his wife. Nobility is despised, property is menaced, all will be killed. They have put up with enough: so they quite happily kill people, break open chests, pillage everything, and breach the wine casks of those rich people. Ah! To make a long story short, they make such a good job of it and do so much harm that the author who said that a little stream breaking its banks does more damage than a great river knew what he was about. It is no lie!

12

**Concerning the peril of giving low-born people more authority than is suitable for them**

O guileless nobility, beware of  
untrustworthy weapons. Ovid, *Fasti*.<sup>67</sup>

A noble prince, says Ovid, should always beware of traitors. It is therefore pertinent to turn from these common people, for the telling of the wicked results of their furious outbursts would never end. Not that I have raised or recalled the subject to harm them or to put them in bad grace with the King, or with you, good prince, nor to blame them before those who might read or hear read this book in the future, when these things will have died down and been forgotten. No: my only motive is, as God knows, to work toward peace and every other good, and to avoid war. I have raised it, in

66. Le Roux de Lincy, *Proverbes*, 2:122.

67. Ovid *Fasti* 2.225, ed. E. H. Alton, D. F. Wormell, and E. Courtney, 4th ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1997), 32.

the light of my small knowledge, to show how to govern such people and skillfully keep them in check, so that perils like those mentioned above may never be met with; for as a wise man said, whoever does not want to fall into difficulties should keep himself away from the occasions for them. At the same time, no doubt, there are even among simple artisans very good people who would never participate in such disturbances, and I know several who were very upset about these dreadful deeds; so let what I have said be taken by the readers in the sense I intended it and not otherwise. For the reasons given in the preceding chapter, then, civic office is not suitable for the populace. But if some would like to say that the opposite seems true because several cities in Italy and elsewhere have government by low-born people, like Bologna the Fat among others, my reply is that indeed they have; but since I have not heard anyone say that they are well governed by such people, or long in peace, I would say they are not. As for what some say of Rome, that it governed itself well in former times without a lord, I say it was not the common people governing, but the nobles, as they do today in the city of Venice and always have done, increasing its dominion.<sup>68</sup> These are ancient lineages of worthy burghers of that city: they are counted as nobles, and would by no means admit any of the common people to their councils. Such governments can last a long time; but I do not believe that government by the common people would be approved by any wise man. Even Aristotle affirms this when he says that rule by several in a country or city is a confused thing.<sup>69</sup> And Cataline, who is mentioned by Sallust, says that the poor in cities—the common people—always envy the rich, and because of this they are quick to rise up and exalt the wicked, wanting new lords and revolutions.<sup>70</sup> Since they are never satisfied no matter how good their rulers are, they constantly want the city's government changed. The truth of this pronouncement is brought home to us by the experience of recent events. For since such people are poor and indigent and can have nothing from one day to the next if they do not earn it with their labor, they always want war, especially civil war, so they can overrun the rich, seeing that they are more numerous than the rich. Giving them authority and enabling them to make war, then, is no different from giving license to robbers and murderers, who normally hide in the woods for fear of the gibbet, to commit their crimes in broad daylight—and encouraging others to join them. If I may be so bold as

68. Christine's father had lived in these cities.

69. Cf. Aristotle *Politica* 2.2.1266a1 (AL 29.1:26).

70. Latini *Tresor* 2.74.13, quoting Sallust *De coniuratione Catalinae* 37.3 (Kurfess, 29).

to say so, there is no greater foolishness for a prince or lord, who wishes to maintain his lordship freely and in peace, than to allow the common people to arm themselves. He who does so is making a rod for his own back, as experience has shown us. I dare say that, if they become accustomed to bearing arms, they will not be easily held in check, but will rebel.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, because as we saw they are fickle and always wanting something new, the lord himself will from time to time be in danger of losing his lordship. A wise duke of Athens, being well aware of this, when he had subjugated the people of Lacedaemonia commanded that they practise their trades and no longer bear arms. From this, and given the clear reasons set out above and many others that could be stated, I conclude (subject to correction) that it would be better for a prince that, if he lack enough men-at-arms in his own country, he employ foreign mercenaries for his wars instead—as is done in Italy and several other places. Even though many might say the opposite, reasoning that people would be fiercer and more proud in defense of their country and in aid of their lord than foreigners, I say all that is nothing. For as Vegetius says, there is no defense or fighting force other than those whose profession it is: that is to say, very good fighting men.<sup>72</sup> Since there is no stability or security among the common people, and since they are good for nothing but pillaging and doing damage for their own advantage, they should not be employed in war.

## 13

**How to ensure that the nobles remain at all times practised at arms**

Art is a teaching that gives a certain  
path and reason for learning. Aristotle,  
*Rhetorica*.<sup>73</sup>

Aristotle says that art or skill is a teaching or an insight that lends certainty and reason to education. So this reminds me to speak at greater length, as seems to me suitable, on the matter touched on earlier: that only trained and practised men are of any worth as soldiers. It should quite rightly surprise us that in this kingdom, which leads and surpasses all others in every sort of glory, the noblemen do not train more in the handling of equipment and weapons in times of peace, in order that in times of need they might

71. Cf. Le Roux de Lincy, *Proverbes*, 2:483; Morawski, nos. 1154, 2335.

72. Vegetius *De re militari* 1.1.2 (Önnefors, 8).

73. Not Aristotle, but ps.—Cicero *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.2.3 (Marx, 3).



be so expert and prepared that there would be no need to call on others for assistance. For as Tully says, weapons are worth little if there is no wisdom, that is to say science of warfare, directing them.<sup>74</sup> To set this matter in order, the king should take charge of it: he should ordain expressly that all noblemen in his kingdom who are required to bear arms and are his loyal liegemen should at all times be well equipped and turned out, and ready to come whenever they are summoned. And he should make certain of this by musters every year on a fixed day in the regions they belong to, letting the lands be divided up by dioceses. Similarly, they should hold tournaments in these dioceses once or twice or three times a year as they prefer, the expenses paid by the royal taxes in the *bonnes villes*.<sup>75</sup> The most illustrious man bearing arms in the country should be appointed by the king to preside over the said musters and celebrations, and no one should be respected as noble unless he attends this training, age and physical strength permitting; nor should anyone else be accepted unless they are of the few whose gentility of heart would permit them to be ennobled. Similarly, once a year and at his own expense, the king should review his forces assembled in battle order, his people well armed and well mounted; and so they can engage in combat a great tournament should be held, with fixed prizes for the valiant. Those who do not qualify should not get in fraudulently by borrowing equipment from one and a mount from another, as is often the case. And thus by taking these measures, which would not be costly, the noblemen would improve in their handling of equipment and use of arms, and they would be more prepared when they were summoned, instead of delaying one or two months before being ready to answer the call, as happens now. In the matter of fighting, as Vegetius says, training makes valiant fighters: one man is worth three because of his experience. These fine customs were followed in Lombardy in the time of my lord Bernabò and Galeazzo his brother, who powerfully established their rule.<sup>76</sup> This is why Seneca said aptly: “Long preparation for war makes for speedy victory.”<sup>77</sup>

74. Latini *Trésor* 2.57.1, quoting Cicero (unidentified).

75. Willard in *Paix* (Willard, 205) suggests that this indicates Christine’s awareness of the French military inadequacies that were to lead to the disaster at Agincourt.

76. Christine mentions Bernabò Visconti in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 2.9 (Solente, 1:128) and speaks of him and his brother in *Mutacion de Fortune*. In *Advision* 3.12 (Reno and Dulac, 113–14; McLeod, 121–22), she laments the death of Bernabò’s nephew, Giangaleazzo, who had been married to Charles V’s sister Isabelle and was the father of Valenta Visconti—particularly because he had invited her to his court and promised a pension. She had praised him in *Long estude* 5050–53, citing him as an example of a prince who, like Charles V, had conquered lands by wisdom, and he serves as an example of the same kind in *Chevalrie* 1.6.

77. Latini *Trésor* 2.86.2, quoting Seneca (unidentified).

**Explaining the peril that the realm of France faced as a consequence of the civil war just past, in order to guard against falling back into it**

Turning to a few things, false reasonings are easily given. Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations*.<sup>78</sup>

Here, Aristotle means that those who do not pay attention to things or do not take sufficient precautions are often or easily deceived. Some further thoughts, then, on the prince's nobles, since it has not been possible above to say enough on this topic—the danger of allowing members of the populace to be unreasonably promoted—to ensure that the past examples and the present one should teach them to organize against similar or worse harms in future. O God! Where is the heart that would not tremble at the thought of the perilous mischance by which the kingdom has gone astray, because of this deplorable war? I raise it here in my book simply, as I have said, to have the present example give lasting wisdom to those that hear it, now and in the future. For as Aristotle says, examples are like lessons to their listeners.<sup>79</sup> Now, let us imagine for a moment what it must have been like to see drawn up in mortal battle, as happened every day and at every hour, so many princes and noblemen, all of one and the same body, under one head and sovereign lord, killing each other and dying pitifully: from the painful thrust of Fortune, in the house of woe. Reflect on how frightful it would be to see a man so charged with anger that he strove to destroy himself, by tearing his own flesh with his teeth, his hands hitting each other with great blows, and each pulling against the other, the feet striking his eyes if that were possible, and withal the whole body thrashing in furious movement against itself. One would certainly say that such a man was moved by great madness. But alas! Is it not similar with civil war in a country, and especially in this one? For in no place were nobles ever so like one single body as here and now—as they should be. Then, after the aforementioned slaughter and confusion, along came the diabolical common people, who could wish for nothing better: with their pikes and hatchets and clubs that they were foolishly allowed to take and carry. They would have wrought carnage, and then finished off the remaining nobles, ladies, girls, and children—without

78. Aristotle *De sophisticis elenchis* 16 (AL 6.1:35): “nam qui ab alio facile paralogizatur.”

79. Cf. Aristotle *Rhetorica* 1.2.11.1356b (AL 31.1:11).

realizing, fools that they were, that foreign lords would soon have come to subjugate them and put them to death, finding no resistance because the nobles were dead. And thus France would have perished and been enslaved, as other realms have been through various circumstances. Still trembling with fear at the memory of it, I pray God that such a thing may never happen. O what a sorry state of affairs! For God's sake! For God's sake, most noble and excellent French princes, knights, and all other nobles now and in the future: may this event and this mortal danger never leave your memory, for your own sake, and so that quarrels which could lead to such a detestable predicament may never be allowed to arise again. Nor let the ruin, destruction, bloodshed, atrocities, impoverishment, irreverence toward a sovereign lord, the ladies and girls made widows and orphans because of this calamity, ever be forgotten or counted for naught as she fears they might be, lest your humble servant, poor Christine, cannot keep silent about that of which the Cock told before, but by her pitiful and tearful letters must speak once more from fear that the same might happen again.<sup>80</sup> And from danger of worse, no wit of man has ever been protection, but only divine prudence, by a clear miracle—for which God be praised.

## 15

**The way in which a prince should treat the common people in order to guard against presumption and cause for rebellion**

If a vague will of different people remains, confusion of who to blame is generated as a friend. 2nd letter, Seneca, 1st book.<sup>81</sup>

But to finish what I began to say earlier (since it is sometimes necessary to delay the conclusion to give more space to the subject), about the kind of government a prince should exercise to keep his people in peace: the above authority can be interpreted in relation to our topic. It may be understood

80. Christine had been pleading with the princes for peace and probity since 1405. *Prison/Epistre* contains her *Epistre à la reine* of 1405 and *Lamentations sur les maux de la France* of 1409; during 1413 she had written the lost *L'Advison du coq* mentioned here and again below in Chapter 24. For a discussion of this lost work, see K. Sneyders de Vogel, "Une œuvre inconnue de Christine de Pisan," in *Mélanges de philologie romane et de littérature médiévale offerts à Ernest Hoepffner par ses élèves et ses amis* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949), 369–70. For an account of the "lachrymose persona" that Christine constructed in many of her works, see Louise d'Arcens, "Petit estat vesval: Christine de Pizan's Grieving Body Politic," in Green and Mews, *Healing the Body Politic*, 201–26.

81. Not Seneca, but Cassiodorus *Variae* 7.27 (CCSL 96:282).

as saying that evil deeds cannot be given up until desire for certain things ceases, and then those who used to be enemies become friends. The common people do indeed want many things, as has been said; but in order for their futile desires to cease, and for evils like those that have happened not to ensue, it seems to me right that the prince, as much so as to do his principal duty toward God as to give the people no cause for murmuring or discontent, should govern them properly and enforce justice. Nor should he let them be oppressed or pillaged by soldiers or anyone else; and he should defend them diligently from all enemies, as a good shepherd does his sheep. He should carry this out, and order that if anything of theirs is taken they should be paid and satisfied at once, for the wise man said: “Do not hold back the laborer’s wages till the next day, lest a curse fall on you.” Let him not impose any levy, tax, or charge on them, beyond what is necessary and within his rights for supporting his wars. Let him keep them in peace and see that no one oppresses them or does them harm, so that they have no cause to revolt or to become involved with anything but their work and their proper occupations. Let him be polite and speak kindly if they happen to speak to him, and look favorably on their just petitions: never be cruel, but seek to treat them in a friendly way. When he goes through the town or elsewhere, or they come and greet him, let him greet them gently and kindly.

Similarly, decree that they should not wear clothes that are extravagant or inappropriate, nor put on those of gentlemen, or embroideries or badges; such pride might be harmful, and has perhaps been so in the past. Similarly, and so that they learn to be better behaved, place a general prohibition on all swearing, curses, and excessive oaths to Our Lord—on pain of severe punishment. Let high and low alike, and even people of the court, be punished so as to uphold the rights of each one and avoid complaint by the lower orders; and let the offenders be punished afterwards with moderate justice; and at the same time let their disorderly gathering and meeting in houses without reason be forbidden. Similarly, since idleness often leads young men into many wrongful actions and foolish conspiracies, let reliable people be appointed by the courts to watch that no disorder is fomented in the city, and that such foolish, idle, young fellows who wander round low taverns doing nothing are no longer tolerated. Let them be questioned on what they are doing and who they work for, and put in prison if they do not go to their workshop, if it is a working day. Similarly, it would surely be well to prohibit this foolish dissenting speech that has been going around, and still is, from which harm could come—and well also to punish those who would continue using it to hound others. To sum up, by generally keeping to these methods, and all

other good ordinances that might be thought of, the prince could keep his people in peace, which would be to their great profit because they would not fall into wasting time as they usually do. Each would be at his own work; they would be content with his rule because it was just and upheld the peace, and they would become more prosperous and better able to help him if needed. So would the people live, under the glorious rule of a good lord.

## 16

### **Examples of the virtue of clemency in a good prince, drawn from the wise King Charles**

A wise and good man does not wish to struggle and expose himself to danger, as conquest is not in our power and as every struggle is dangerous. But it is characteristic of a wise and very good man not to wish to oust an adversary, which cannot happen without felony and peril. [. . .] *Divine Institutes, about the Blessed Life*, book 1.4.<sup>82</sup>

I have set out in brief, as it seems to me, all that affects the government of the common people. But now, once more, I am pleased to draw an example for your encouragement, as promised earlier, from your good grandfather the wise King Charles, already alluded to several times above. Since not everything can be said at once about what constitutes the virtue of clemency, with which I began this third part of the book, and continuing on the theme of peace and the good government by the prince of everything touching the general estates of the realm, I shall show how a prince may, more by clemency and kindness than by war or use of arms or force, acquire friendship and lands and goods, from friend and stranger alike. Useful in this regard is the Latin authority quoted above, which says that it is not in the character of a wise and good man to fight openly and expose himself to danger, for it is not within our power to vanquish completely, and every such attack is anathema and forbidden. But it is characteristic of the wise man not to wish to oust his adversary, something that could not be done without felony and peril.

82. Lactantius *Divinae Institutiones* 6.18.29 (Brandt, 552). Christine includes, but does not translate, extra Latin words (in square brackets) presumably copied from a corrupt source.

It certainly seems, noble lord, that the said king your grandfather had heard and retained this lesson. For he was so humane and benign that although he knew well enough that he had many enemies, both far and near, he did not aim at their destruction, well though he could have if he had wanted to. Rather, he always set all his power of love and benevolence to converting them. (Anyone who wanted to could name many of these, but there is no need.) And following the doctrine of Jesus Christ, he did not want the death of sinners at all, but only that they be converted and live. Why do you think, then, that God looked with such favor on him in the matter of his wars, and that the good fortune of King Edward of England, who had mistreated this kingdom so badly for so long, declined? In God's name, it was no doubt because he was so saddened by the shedding of human blood; and never in his time would he consent to pitched battle against his enemies, nor to their destruction, unless it was by their cause, presumption, and guilt—whence they always suffered misfortune. In that way he acquired much: because of his clemency and benevolence. For in the same way as it is said of the Romans that they oft-times acquired more from the renown that spread of their clemency and justice than by force of arms, because many came nobly to submit to them, similarly, many noble barons among his enemies in the lands of Guyenne and elsewhere surrendered to this king of their own free will, without any constraint, because of the renown of his goodness, even when they were at war. Such were my Lord Bertucat d'Albret, the Lord of Bedos, my lord Anissant de Caumont, the lord of Castets-en-Dorthe, the noble scions of Saint-Aoys, and several other barons and knights, putting themselves and their great and powerful lands in his hands.<sup>83</sup> And he did not fail to receive them kindly, or to keep them at his court in great honor, as is fitting. Similarly in Lombardy several great and powerful lords sought his love and his alliance.

But more importantly, see what a noble thing the renown of a great lord is: for I swear to you that even the Sultan of Babylon, desiring to make his acquaintance, sent his knights on an embassy, bearing many fine presents.<sup>84</sup> And I can testify to this, since as a child I saw them and marveled at their strange clothes, in the house of my father—a counselor of the said king.

83. This event is recounted in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 2.32; Solente (1:221) supplies the more modern versions of their names.

84. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.31 (Solente, 2:84).

**More on King Charles, how by his wisdom, clemency, and benevolence he constantly acquired lands and friends**

For kings, security that comes from mercy is more certain than frequent punishment. Seneca, *On Clemency*.<sup>85</sup>

O! How well the good King Charles of whom we are speaking had taken in the words of Seneca, who says that kings gain much more certain security by benevolence and kindness than by vindictiveness. Concerning this wise benevolence, if there had been any knights or others at his court rumored to belong to the party of his enemies, do you think he would banish them or have them put in prison, if the matter was not serious? Of course he never did. For it seemed to him that by sending them away he would have increased the number of his enemies. But he made them swear solemnly that they would be good and loyal to him, and gave them so many benefits and honors that it would have been wicked of them not to be. Nevertheless, he wisely remained on his guard with them, and kept a watch on their behavior so they did not plot anything against him. By this benevolence he drew to himself the hearts of all noble men, whether friends or enemies: not thinking to control them by rough treatment, nor suffering them to be discontented with him. They told each other how they had been well treated, so that many who had been enemies were converted into good friends. In this way he never ceased to gain friends by means of gifts, benefits, and kind treatment, whether they were great, middling, or small; and I may tell you indeed that he was little inclined to vengeance for wrongs done to him, but always to taming hearts with benevolence.

O, what great wisdom it is for a prince to act thus! For do not imagine that force of arms would ever achieve what gentleness and benevolence will. What I could tell you, revered lord, of your most wise grandfather! It would take too long to tell all his virtues: but to put it in a nutshell, so steadily did he act with wisdom, clemency, and liberality that the star of his good fortune rose from strength to strength.

At the same time, do not imagine that he was ignorant of what it takes to carry on a war successfully. That is, both by supporting it financially (knowing also how to honor the chiefs of the armies to whom he owed those fine victories), and making sure that what was captured remained in

85. Seneca *De clementia* 1.8.6 (Hosius, 221).

his hands. In fact, he provided for this so wisely that no conquest—whether of city, fortress, domain, or castle—was afterwards lost, through rebellion or otherwise. This is a wonderful thing, and not what commonly happens with conquered territories, which often pass easily from hand to hand through rebellion or other challenge, even though many were conquered that had been in various foreign hands for a long time. And as you have heard, this king by his wisdom, magnanimity, strength, clemency, and liberality rid his country of its enemies, so that they no longer made their wonted raids. All this considered, I may conclude these virtues to be of more value to a prince than any other strength, seeing that this prince—working principally through these virtues, and not moving from his palaces and royal seats—reconquered, reestablished, and enlarged his kingdom, which before had been devastated, lost, and left forlorn by his warlike and knightly predecessors.<sup>86</sup> And the knighthood of France, moribund from the horror of past ill fortune, was revived by him—lifted up, set on its feet in great boldness and good fortune. These things considered, Seneca said truly that there is more wisdom in one day for a wise man than in a long age for a fool.<sup>87</sup>

## 18

### **How the wise King Charles loved knowledge, and honored scholars and learning**

Mercy and truth keep the king, and  
his throne is strengthened by mercy.  
Proverbs, Chapter 21.<sup>88</sup>

Still praising this virtue of clemency in princes and lords, Solomon teaches in his *Proverbs*: “Mercy and truth will guard the king, and by clemency and kindness his throne will be strengthened.” That is, his power and high honor will be increased and strengthened. As said before, this means that by clemency and graciousness, which encompass mercy and truth, the prince may gain the love of all, and this love is the best and surest safeguard of all. But it is not enough for a prince to be kind, benevolent, humane, and tractable only toward the great and powerful: he should be the same toward the least of his subjects, as suggested earlier; and it is in this that the greatest benevolence

86. Cf. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 2.10 (Solente, 1:131–33). Christine makes an explicit virtue of Charles V’s practice of not himself engaging in battle in *Chevalrie* 1:6 (Willard and Willard, 21).

87. Latini *Trésor* 2.52.8, quoting Seneca *Epistulae morales* 78.28 (Hense, 298).

88. Prov. 20:28.



is recognized. Thus it is written of the good emperor Titus that he was so benevolent to all that no one knew whom he wanted to please most.<sup>89</sup> Not, however, that we should understand this benevolence to be naïve and without reserve, making oneself too available and intimate—unbecoming a great lord, or any wise man—as he would then be less esteemed and held to be foolish or vulgar. Rather, maintaining the honor of his rank in speech, behavior and bearing, and keeping to suitable hours, he should willingly hear and receive the petitions of his people great and small, protecting the rights of each estate in its condition, as has already been touched on, and as the aforementioned King Charles surely knew how to do. As well as looking favorably on all their just requests, he honored all their ranks—after the nobles that is, as has already been told; and the learned, as he showed at the University of Paris, where, by preserving their privileges and always adding to their freedoms, he kept them in love and peace.<sup>90</sup> He had great reverence for their congregation and was always glad to see the rector and the eminent masters, and most benevolently listened to their propositions and followed their counsels. And why would he not have done, for was he not a learned man himself: a real philosopher and a good astrologer, who loved that science very much?<sup>91</sup> He showed that he was enlightened by his supreme love of books, of which he had a marvelous quantity, and of all sorts. But what is more, even though he was well enough instructed in grammar to have mastered Latin, he had all the most important books, Holy Scripture and others, translated by well-qualified scholars, masters in theology—so that his brothers and those who would come after him, and all other lay people, could profit from understanding what they contained. The Bible in three volumes, for example: the text, then the text together with glosses, and then allegorized in another way. Similarly, the great book of Saint Augustine on the *City of God*: the *Soliloquio*, the *Book of Heaven and Earth*. Similarly, Valerius Maximus, the nine books of the *Properties of Things*, Josephus, Aristotle's books *Ethics* and *Politics*; and to add some more examples, the *Problems* of Aristotle, the *Policraticus*, and many others, so that there were masters on high wages continually working on this.<sup>92</sup> But to return to the topic of the

89. Cf. Jerome *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Galatas* 3, PL 26:462B.

90. Cf. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.13 (Solente, 2:46).

91. Cf. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.3–5 (Solente, 2:12–20). Christine also praises Charles's love of learning in *Corps de policie* 1.26 (Kennedy, 44; Forhan, 45–46), and in *Long estude* 4999–5049, she gives a brief version of the argument outlined in these chapters.

92. This translation project and Charles's comprehension of Latin is alluded to also in *Long estude* 5016–34 and outlined in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.12 (Solente, 2:42–45).

clemency of this prince toward his subjects: this good lord, when he came to deal in council with things pertaining to the finances of the kingdom, or some decree or undertaking, would wish the burghers of his *bonnes villes* summoned; also the important merchants, and even some of the common people. He summoned them when he made new laws<sup>93</sup> instituting that, former custom notwithstanding, kings' sons in France could be crowned from the age of twelve, if the situation arose. And this was sworn to by his princes and nobles and clerks, and the abovementioned estates of the people. And likewise other laws and statutes on the government of the kingdom.

19

### Some examples of the punishments God sent to cruel princes

A prince is slow to punishments, quick to rewards, and he mourns every time he is thought to be fierce. Ovid, *Tristia*.<sup>94</sup>

It is therefore fitting for a prince, as we have seen, to be clement, humane, and gracious, and consequently cruelty does not suit him. By this, the wise men say, a natural prince can be distinguished from a tyrant, since the natural prince treats his subjects as a father his children, or a shepherd guarding his fold, ready to risk his life in their defense; and the tyrant is like the ravening wolf among the sheep.<sup>95</sup> So the authority above says that a prince must be slow to punish, and prompt to reward, and must regret it on those occasions when it is necessary to be harsh to anyone, in such a way that he seems cruel. Let us turn to this matter, since we have said enough about graciousness in a prince, and it seems to me right to devote some space to the strongest censure of cruelty and of the evil that can come from it, as much to the rulers themselves who are or would be cruel, as to all their lands and dominion. First of all, Tully says there are few of them who die well—and no wonder, for what in this world is more hated by God than cruelty?<sup>96</sup> Nothing, certainly, as it is entirely contrary to His worthy law, which is wholly founded on charity and love of one's neighbor, without which love and affection nothing else

93. Charles's practice of consultation is also described in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.8 (Solente, 2:28).

94. Ovid *Epistulae ex Ponto* 1.2.122, ed. J. A. Richmond (Leipzig: Teubner, 1990), 90: "sed piger ad poenas princeps, ad praemia uelox, quique dolet, quotiens cogitur esse ferox."

95. Cf. Latini *Trésor* 2.44.3–4: "Le gouvernement de l'ome a sa masnie est senblable au gouvernement dou roi a son people; . . . car li buen seigneures s'esforce de bien fere a ses subdés, ausint comme li pastors de son fouca."

96. Unidentified.

we did would have merit. And therefore, if he who does not do good to his fellow attracts the wrath of God, how must he who persecutes, destroys, and kills him be hated? We can find plenty of examples in the Scriptures of cruel princes coming to a bad end in the final reckoning through divine punishment; and even the experience of our own times teaches this to us, so that much could be said on the matter. But let us turn to what Holy Scripture says about those who delight in bloodshed. Such as Saul, persecutor of David, whom God punished for his cruelty with a famine that afflicted his country for three years: in the end he killed himself, and he and his sons were hanged, as it is written in the twenty-first chapter of the second book of Kings.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Sennacherib was a prince of great cruelty who destroyed people and lands, and for this God punished him so horribly that he was killed by his own children, as it is written in the first chapter of the book of Tobit.<sup>98</sup>

Similarly, and showing how cruel people usually do not shrink from disloyal or treacherous acts: because Joab treacherously and by a truce killed Abner, and also he murdered Amasa under cover of a kiss, he was killed in the temple, as it is written in the second chapter of the third book of Kings.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, was not Holophernes, the cruel persecutor of God's people, also killed by the valiant lady Judith, as it is written in the thirteenth chapter of the book of the same name?<sup>100</sup> Similarly, to King Antiochus, because bloodshed aroused no compassion in him, God sent such a punishment that his whole body was covered in worm-filled sores, which stank so much that it went through his whole army, so none could stand to be near him; in the end he died pitifully all alone in the desert without burial, and even the birds would not eat his body.<sup>101</sup> Likewise, because of the cruelty of the Babylonians—persecutors and destroyers of Jerusalem and of that city's king, Zedekiah—as a punishment from God great Babylon was later destroyed so completely and dreadfully that it has remained uninhabited except for dragons and serpents, as it is written in the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah.<sup>102</sup> Many more examples can be found in the Holy Scripture of the great punishments God inflicts for cruelty, since He cannot tolerate it for long. All princes and powerful men would do well to take note of them, so as not to go the same

97. Not Kings, but 2 Sam. 21:1–9. Strictly speaking, this passage tells only of sons of Saul being punished for the cruelty of their father, who killed himself at Gelboa (1 Sam. 31:4).

98. Tob. 1:18–21.

99. 1 Kings 2:5; 2 Samuel 20.

100. Jth. 13:1–20.

101. 2 Macc. 9:1–12.

102. Isa. 13:19–22.

way. Other writings are full of them: it is said of King Mithridates that after committing several acts of cruelty he was slain by his own children.<sup>103</sup>

Nero and others likewise died wretchedly, from which we can conclude that such cruel tyrants in persecuting others persecute themselves, and even in this world they begin their time in hell, from which they will never escape. For Juvenal says that for those who want to be feared, fear engenders hate—and hate conspiracy, and conspiracy death. Of the misery of those who think to make all the world tremble at their atrocities, Horace says that none live in such fear as they do, nor so apprehensively, nor with their minds less at rest. For as they have committed crimes against everyone, and trust no one, they always suspect that those whom they terrorize will be lying in wait for them.<sup>104</sup> That is why Boethius said: “Do not think that he who always has guards with him is powerful, for he fears those whom he frightens.”<sup>105</sup> And this is why it is said of Denis the Tyrant that he was so afraid of the barber’s razor that he burnt off his beard himself.<sup>106</sup>

20

### How cruelty comes from pride

It is a type of death to live badly. Ovid,  
*Tristia*.<sup>107</sup>

Ovid means here that to live badly is not a true life, but almost a kind of death. This can rightly be said, for a man devoid of virtues is overcome by vices, and is as nothing in the sight of God; but the virtuous man lives, and will live perpetually. So in order to live, than which nothing is better, those vices must be shunned as the real killers of soul, body, honor, and reputation. Because as we have said above none is so deadly among them as cruelty, and so displeasing to God and even to nature, in addition to having condemned it in the preceding chapter it is now fitting for us to tell of its evil birth and the root from which it springs, in order to shun the whole. Let us say that, properly speaking, the real root and wellspring of cruelty is invariably pure pride. For although cruelty is practised for many reasons—sometimes from greed to rob and usurp the lordship, lands, or goods of others, other times

103. *De viris illustribus* 76.7, ed. F. Pichlmayr (Leipzig: Teubner, 1911), 68.

104. Cf. Horace *Saturae* 1.3.58.

105. Latini *Trésor* 2.119.5, quoting Boethius *Philosophiae consolatio* 3.m.5.1–2 (Bieler, 8).

106. Latini *Trésor* 2.119.6, quoting Cicero *De officiis* 2.7.25 (Atzert, 63).

107. Ovid *Epistulae ex Ponto* 3.4.75 (Richmond, 71): “si genus est mortis male uiuere, terra moratur.”

from revenge, and so on—nevertheless, all things considered, it all comes from pride. While the desire to oppress others wrongly and without cause comes from this source, no matter what the immediate motive is, the way to put it into effect is to use cruelty: which is why I say that cruelty has its birth there. O Pride, most detestable vice, hated by God: so many evils result from you! You so blind this human nature, in all estates, that not even the most miserable earthworm would want to ascend to it. Through this have all the evils of the past come about, on the part of the great, and also of the middling and the small. But speaking to the great, who are excessively given to pride, Horace says that tall trees are often weakened by strong winds and sometimes blown down and uprooted, and the tops of high towers easily fall down; also, lightning falls most often on peaks and high mountains.<sup>108</sup> Therefore men who are raised to the greatest heights should not forget the tricks Fortune can play, and should keep on their guard against being too raised up by pride, remembering that they are men subject to many passions: for since such aggrandizement is displeasing to God, and He cannot in the long run tolerate it, it is rare that He does not bring down the arrogant by His divine providence, as He brought down the evil angels from His high heaven into hell. And they should note the example of those princes or powerful people who in great pride presumed to subjugate all by their strength, believing nothing could harm them, without taking into account the hand of God which is on all things. The Holy Scriptures and other writings are full of these; thus it is written of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, that, finding himself in his noble city surrounded by all his might, riches, and pleasures, he became so proud that he had no regard for any other power. God therefore wanted to punish him for this: while he was at dinner in great pride and pomp, drinking and eating from great golden vessels his father had pillaged from Jerusalem, there appeared a hand writing on the wall the punishment God was sending to him; and, its explanation having been made by Daniel, that very night he was slain and the kingdom divided, as it is contained in the sixth chapter of the book of Daniel.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Absalom was so proud that he had no regard for King David his father, and considered he was better and knew more.<sup>110</sup> Those who are bad and presumptuous children, whether of princes or others, would do well to note this example: because the honor they receive on account of their parents they attribute to

108. Latini *Trésor* 2.119.3, quoting Horace *Carmina* 2.10.9–12 (Shackleton Bailey, 52).

109. Actually Dan. 5:1–6.

110. 2 Sam. 15:1–12.

themselves, and become proud on account of it, and no longer bother to obey father and mother, but despise them. If they are aged they want them to die so they can rule untrammelled. Because Absalom was like this, God permitted that while he was running about in hot pursuit of his father, the branches of a tree caught him by his long fair hair of which he was very vain; and he hung there until Joab came and killed him, as it is written in the eighteenth chapter of the book of Exodus.<sup>111</sup>

## 21

### Concerning the punishments God has sent to proud princes

One who does not understand himself  
and does not hear another in his mind,  
places himself as a useless man forever.  
Aristotle, *Ethics* 3.<sup>112</sup>

He who neither knows nor listens to or believes those who do know, says Aristotle, is on that account a useless man, good for nothing. The words offered above can be applied to those who need to learn, and yet do not deign to listen to good teaching or pay heed to it. And they may relate even to the proud, referred to above, who are the people in the world who value such teaching least. Nevertheless I shall give some more examples of God's punishment of such proud men, princes and others alike. Nebuchadnezzar, finding himself to be a prince of marvelous power, grew in pride before all the world, and overreached himself so far as to believe himself more than a man, wanting to be worshipped like God.<sup>113</sup> Let those who thus presume of themselves—whether in wit, beauty, strength, power, or riches—understand that others may not share their high opinion, so it often happens that they find themselves seriously in the wrong. God wanted to punish the arrogance and great pride of that king so severely that he reduced him to the state of a dumb beast; and he lived with the beasts for seven years, eating hay and grazing in the fields, as it is written in the fourth chapter of the book of Daniel.<sup>114</sup> Similarly,

111. Presumably a mistaken reference by Christine for 2 Sam. 18:32.

112. *P* supplies "libro." Aristotle *Ethica* 1.2.1095b (AL 26.3:378): "Qui autem neque ipsemet intelligit, neque alium audiens in animo ponet, hic *nursus* inutilis vir."

113. Christine similarly uses Nebuchadnezzar as the epitome of pride in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 1.27 (Solente, 1:75–76). In *Advision* 1.24 (Reno and Dulac, 42–43; McLeod, 34–35), his fate is used as an example of the way God punishes pride; see also *Trois vertus* 1.4 (Willard and Hicks, 19; Lawson, 41).

114. Dan. 4:1–34.

Seron the king boasted that he could resist and prevail against everyone, and because of this, God willed that he be defeated by Judas Maccabaeus in spite of his great power, as it is written in the third chapter of the book of Maccabees.<sup>115</sup> God became angry in the same way with his servant David, because in his arrogance he wanted to count his people, so in punishment God gave him a choice of three chastisements: the first was that there would be a famine for seven years; the second, that his enemies would harass him for three months; the third, that pestilence would visit his kingdom for three days. David wanted to put himself entirely in God's hands, so he chose the last; and in the space of those three days a very great number of people died, as it is written in the twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Kings.<sup>116</sup> Many other kings and princes could be told of, as reported in Holy Scripture, and as can be found in all other writings, who were punished by divine justice for their pride; but I leave these aside for the sake of brevity, so that we can summarily touch on a few of the punishments God has visited upon the common people, from whom poverty has not, for the most part, removed pride. The thirty-ninth chapter of the book of Jeremiah tells how, on account of the pride and disobedience of the people of Israel, God permitted that they and their kings Zedekiah and Jehoiakim be led into Babylon in slavery, where they were for forty years; and this is what is called the Babylonian captivity.<sup>117</sup>

On account of the pride of the people, Our Lord permitted their persecution by the Philistines, which lasted for forty years, as it is written in the eighth chapter of the book of Judges.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, on account of the people's pride, which God could not tolerate, the punishment of the flood came about, as it is written in the seventh chapter of Genesis.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, because of the pride of the people in wanting to make the city of Babel so that it touched the sky, God sent down on them a confusion of languages, as it is written in the eleventh chapter of Genesis.<sup>120</sup> This example can be understood figuratively: when the people want to climb higher than they should, God sends confusion among them that makes them fall. Horace therefore speaks well concerning such people: there are some who think

115. 1 Macc. 3:14–26.

116. In fact in 2 Sam. 24:12–25. See also in *Advision* 1.24 (Reno and Dulac, 42; McLeod, 34–35).

117. Jer. 39:4–9.

118. Judg. 8:4–26.

119. Gen. 7:1–24.

120. Gen. 11:9: "et idcirco vocatum est nomen eius Babel quia ibi confusum est labium univ ersae terrae et inde dispersit eos Dominus super faciem cunctarum regionum."

their eyes are stronger than the sphere of the sun, but by trying to look at it they blind themselves.<sup>121</sup>

22

**Here begins consideration of the virtue of liberality: its use, and how it is fitting for a prince**

Ordered charity considers no one to be a stranger but gathers all together at the opportune time. That ordered charity seems to exist which knows how to begin with its own servants. Guido in the Introduction to his *Summa*.<sup>122</sup>

After clemency follows the fifth virtue fitting for a prince, as we have said above: liberality, which is like a sister of clemency. Liberality, when it is exercised justly, has its roots in charity, of which the authority above says that if it is well regulated then no man is considered a stranger, which means that the charitable man wants to do good to intimates and strangers alike. Charity receives all, he says, at the opportune time: that is, when the charitable man sees a chance to help and do good, no one is turned away. Nonetheless, well-regulated charity is that which begins with one's closest friends: even though charity is doing good to whomever one can, nonetheless one is more closely bound to one's own than to other people. This liberality is thus most suitable for you, good Prince Louis to whom I speak, and therefore it is fitting to set out its properties. Now, it must be known that this virtue has two parts: one is itself called liberality, and the other is largesse.<sup>123</sup> The first applies not only to giving gifts of money, lands, jewels, or other possessions, but also to being liberal in lending the aid of one's power, and also with one's body, one's word, one's efforts, and one's welcome and hospitality; in cheerfully pardoning injuries, in willingly helping the needy, and generally in all those things in which one can be of value to others. The other part only applies to money: it is abundant giving of money, or other things in its place, and is called largesse or generosity. And it is clear that liberality and largesse are more fitting for a prince than for anyone else. For

121. Unidentified in Horace.

122. Unidentified in Guido Faba.

123. Willard in *Paix* (Willard, 209) notes similarity to Giles of Rome *Li livres du gouvernement des rois* 1.17, ed. S. P. Molenaar (1899; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1966).



why were princes established on earth, if not to aid and support—by the authority of their power, by their body, word, travail and encouragement, and all other means of assistance—not only their subjects, but likewise all Christians whether strangers and friends? Indeed, any who may need it and come to ask it of them, such as the Church if she is oppressed or trampled by a tyrant; or ladies, whether widows or orphans; or other Christian princes wrongly under attack. Generally, any man under their rule who requests it with just cause they should assist with their word, maintaining justice—as did the Romans in the past, who refused assistance to no one.<sup>124</sup> Princes should devote themselves diligently to all things profitable for the polity, willingly granting pardon to those who are contrite and plead for it, bestowing favors, and such things as it is vouchsafed to a prince to perform. Doing these things willingly and habitually is true liberality.

23

### Concerning the virtue of generosity and in what it consists

The root of all good things is charity.  
Cassiodorus, *On Charity or the Love of  
God*.<sup>125</sup>

Charity is the root of all that is good, says Cassiodorus. Following what we have said above about liberality, let us now say that the second part of this liberality is called largesse, or generosity. This consists of willingly giving fine gifts, and when it is well regulated it is used toward four kinds of people for four reasons. First, to the poor—and principally in ways that involve almsgiving for the love of God.<sup>126</sup> Second, to those who are worthy of it for the love of goodness, since favoring the good befits the princely condition. Third, to those who deserve it because it is not fitting for a prince simply to take the effort, labor, or service of another: he should reward it immediately. And

124. In *Cops de policie* 1.14 (Kennedy, 24–26; Forhan, 25–28), Christine praises the liberality of the Romans.

125. Not Cassiodorus, but Peter of Blois *De amicitia Christiana* 42 (Davy, 488), quoting from Augustine *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps. 90, sermo 1.8 (CCSL 39:1260): “quomodo enim radix omnium malorum cupiditas, sic radix omnium bonorum caritas est.”

126. *P* inserts at this point: “lequel bien fait en charité est si acceptable à dieu que sans lui nul autre ne lui pourroit plaire et là où il est ne pourroit avoir faulte des autres vertuz et pour ce dit l’auctorité que charité est racine de touz biens” (this good done in charity is so acceptable to God that without it none other could please Him, and where it exists the other virtues cannot be lacking; this is why the authority says that charity is the root of all good).

fourth, to foreigners for the sake of his own honor and the growth of his good reputation and renown. This virtue, liberality and largesse together, goes well with clemency, as we have seen: in the acquisition of friends, at home and abroad, both by performing acts of friendship through generous aid, support, and comfort, and by generosity with fine gifts and favors. And know that a legitimate gift must meet four conditions: the first is that it be the property of the giver and not taken from one to give to another. So Tully said: “Let us give in such a way that our gifts are worth something to our friends and do not harm those around us.” The second, that it be given freely, cheerfully, and generously, not reluctantly and with bad grace, nor only at length after being pursued for it; for as Seneca says, a gift long awaited loses some of its merit, because there is no promise so sweet that the wait is not most bitter.<sup>127</sup>

The third is that it be given for some good purpose, not to deceive or cause someone harm. On this Horace says: “The gift presented to cause harm is like poison hidden in sweet liquor.”<sup>128</sup> And the fourth, that it be given with sincere affection without pretence; for Macrobius says that lovers love poorly who desire harm to befall those whom they show friendship, in order then to show them sympathy in their trouble—such as keeping them company when they are exiled, or helping them when they fall into poverty, or visiting them when they are sick. He declares that he hardly distinguishes between such friends and enemies, for it would be a strange kind of betrayal to want someone to fall into the water in order to pull him out, or to be beaten in order to avenge him, or evicted in order to shelter him. Love done like this should not be prized at all, since it serves no good purpose.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore we should know that largesse when it is well regulated is a virtue; but when it exceeds reasonable bounds it is a vice that is called prodigality or foolish generosity, which proceeds from indiscretion and lack of prudence—such as when some prince or other gives excessively to someone and they value it little, and have not deserved it, yet he pays little or nothing of what he owes. And he does not reward those who have served him well and to whom he is bound or who merit it, spending his wealth on superfluous things, on excesses and vanities and all sorts of foolish expenses, and leaves what is necessary, good and profitable in neglect—in ruin and abandon. O, a prodigal prince is a great danger! For certainly there are no people as greedy as such princes, and there is no act of tyranny they would

127. Latini *Trésor* 2.95.4, quoting Cicero *De officiis* 1.14.43 (Atzert, 16), and Latini *Trésor* 2.95.2, quoting Seneca *De beneficiis* 2.1.1.2 (Hosius, 21).

128. Unidentified in Horace.

129. Unidentified in Macrobius.

not commit to serve the needs of their prodigality: no land, people, or property they would not destroy. It is their habit to take from some without cause, to give to others for no reason. And so, to conclude this subject, there is undoubtedly no area in which discretion is more necessary, especially in a prince, because his deeds touch more people in the matter of spending: both ordinary and as gifts or other payments. For where Prudence is not the pay-mistress there is ruin for soul, body, wealth, and country.

24

### Concerning greed and the evil that comes from it

Greed is the root of all evils.  
Cassiodorus.<sup>130</sup>

There is no doubt that greed is the root of all evil, as the authority here says. It would take forever to describe fully, this greed and the evils that have come and always will come into the world through it. So to put it briefly—and every reasonable man can recognize it without more being said in detail—all the destruction of lands, kingdoms, domains, and countries, all cruelties and slaughters, and generally all evils past, present, and future unmistakably spring from this cause. Alas! This most detestable vice, through which so many souls and bodies perish, should be hated above all. It is much more dangerous in a prince and powerful person than in any other, because they have more capacity to put it into effect through taking by force, and they have a desire for possession and a fire of greed that others do not. On this subject we might mention the great sin and evil it is for a prince to take more than is reasonable from his people. Those who exceed this and go beyond the limits of what is right, and those who advise it, may be certain that God will not let it go without severe punishment. For He is immutable and His stability is as firm as it was in the time of King Rehoboam, mentioned above, whom He punished so severely for his greed in taking an unreasonable amount from his people that he lost his kingdom.<sup>131</sup> Similarly in the case of Achan: because he greedily looted goods in the destruction of Jericho, Our Lord allowed the people to be persecuted by their enemies and Achan himself was stoned at God's command, as it is written in the seventh chapter of Joshua.<sup>132</sup> All the crimes of King Antiochus, whose cruelty has already been described, were in

130. Peter of Blois *De amicitia Christiana* 42 (Davy, 488), alluding to 1 Tim. 6:10.

131. 3 Kings (= 1 Kings) 14:21–31.

132. Josh. 7:24–26.

the way of robbing the people: and his end was painful, so it is said.<sup>133</sup> There are so many other examples, and of lesser men than kings, that I leave them aside for the sake of brevity. Similarly Gehazi, who out of greed accepted the gifts of Naaman—earlier refused by his master Elisha, who had cured Naaman of leprosy—became a leper himself, as it is written in the fifth chapter of the fourth book of Kings.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, Joseph’s brothers sold him out of greed, and because of this there was famine, as it is written in the thirty-seventh chapter of Genesis.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, because from avarice Laban wanted to deceive Jacob and cheat him of his wages several times, God transferred all Laban’s property to Jacob, as is written in the thirtieth chapter of Genesis.<sup>136</sup>

So does God punish His creation every day, because of the little love that human beings have for each other—against His worthy commandment—and because of this treacherous greed that makes each one take from his neighbor. This is why divine punishment, although we take little notice of it, is sent to us every day in the form of wars, deaths, betrayals, and innumerable plagues; and we are not chastened, which is a sign of obstinacy, an unredeemable sin. But since it is worth little to speak of the maladies without mentioning the remedies that are good to use against this cruel ardor of greed, I shall pass over them more briefly, because I wrote about them at length, according to my poor understanding, in a little treatise named *The Vision of the Cock*, whose name can translate the ancient name of this kingdom, which I presented to you yourself, Louis of France, sitting in your chamber at Saint Paul this same year in the season of Lent.<sup>137</sup>

25

### What can be said in condemnation of the vice of greed

A small dry mouthful with joy is  
better than a house full of wealth and  
contention. Proverbs, Chapter 1.<sup>138</sup>

In relation to what has been said above about the consequences of greed, Solomon says in his *Proverbs*, quoted above, that a little piece of dry bread

133. 1 Macc. 1:10–64.

134. 4 Kings (= 2 Kings) 5:29–37.

135. Gen. 37:28.

136. Gen. 30:25–43.

137. The Roman province of Gaul was called *Gallia*; an inhabitant was a Gaul, or *Gallus*, which is an exact homonym of the word for a cock.

138. Prov. 17:1: “melior est buccella sicca cum gaudio quam domus plena victimis cum iurgio.”

accompanied by joy and peace is worth more than a house full of riches accompanied by disturbances and quarrelling. Therefore, so as to say something useful for the discipline and correction of those who are too greedy, whether they be princes or others, it seems apposite to recall some authorities for their instruction. Such as Tully, who says: “There are people who think they will increase their profit by ruining others through all sorts of fraud and wickedness; but they are deceived in this, since life and honor are worth more than money. Although they perhaps fill their treasuries by their cleverness in damaging others, this is more to their loss than their profit. It often comes about that they shorten the term of their life through the enemies they make in wronging many people; and at the very least they need to be more on their guard, since he who is hated by many needs to guard himself against all.”<sup>139</sup> For as Tully says also: “If for gain we do not mind stripping others of their goods or taking from them by force, it follows that the society formed by human love, in accordance with nature, will be sundered, where it should remain one.”<sup>140</sup> It is just the same as if one part of the body possessed understanding and strove to draw to itself the blood, health, and substance of its neighboring limb. This would cause the weakening and deterioration of the whole body, of which every limb needs its share of blood, humor, and nourishment. So it is in human society: for just as Nature grants that each part acquires what it needs for its betterment, she does not wish us to strip someone else to clothe ourselves. Furthermore, the same Tully says in conclusion: “Therefore, you should not care so much about your own profit that it makes you lose the right to be called a good man, since such acquisition cannot bring you as much as it robs you of, when it takes away your goodness and human faith.”<sup>141</sup>

That this human faith is worth more than possession of any fortune is well demonstrated by the example of Damon and Phintias, who were such faithful companions and loved each other so greatly that when the cruel tyrant Denis had condemned one of them to death, and the one who had been condemned requested a little time to go home and make his will and put his affairs in order, he left his companion as a hostage in prison to await death there if he did not return on time. The other returned to his death as he had promised, and the tyrant marveled greatly at the loyalty, faithfulness, and love of these two companions. And so, prizing such loyalty in human

139. Latini *Trésor* 2.122.4, paraphrasing Cicero *De officiis* 3.5.21–22 (Atzert, 91).

140. Latini *Trésor* 2.122.5, paraphrasing Cicero *De officiis* 3.5.26 (Atzert, 92).

141. Latini *Trésor* 2.122.7, quoting Cicero *De officiis* 3.20.81–82 (Atzert, 110).

company more than any riches, even one who was a tyrant and very wicked nonetheless begged these two to admit him as a third party to their loyal love and companionship.<sup>142</sup>

Therefore, just as this example may serve to demonstrate that love is worth more than riches, Tully says, in addressing princes, that there is nothing that establishes their rule better than attracting subjects to their advantage; that is to say, winning their love by doing good to them, which works against greed.<sup>143</sup> This is why Seneca said: “He is rich who is good, as no treasure equals goodness—nor is anything else true wealth, as much as fools may disagree.”<sup>144</sup> For as Solomon said, the fool always wants what is in fact contrary to his interests, meaning riches, in order to use them foolishly; and the wise man, who knows what goodness is, wants to have enough and no more, in order to do good.

## 26

**On liberality: concerning the good order which the abovementioned king kept when hearing petitions**

I can encourage you to put friendship  
before all human things. For nothing  
is so suitable to nature, so suited for  
things that are either suited or opposed.  
Cicero, *On Friendship*.<sup>145</sup>

“I can exhort you,” says Tully, “to put friendship before all other human affairs, for nothing is more in keeping with nature, or more applicable to propitious and adverse affairs”—and the contrary is true of greed. Following what we have said on this subject above, let us say more about the virtue of largesse. The authority just quoted is very apt, since there is nothing through which so many friendships can be made as largesse, as we have seen. Therefore it is a very good thing for a prince to employ it: wisely and with discretion. To give examples of this in our accustomed manner, following good and compelling reasons we shall return to our subject of King Charles: to his habits in practicing this virtue, and first of all concerning the virtue of liberality in a good prince. O, what a sweet thing it was to see how he came out after hearing mass to give audience to all the people, poor or otherwise! Noble ladies were

142. Latini *Trésor* 2.122.10, quoting Cicero *De officiis* 3.10.45 (Atzert, 99).

143. Cf. Latini *Trésor* 2.122.11, quoting Cicero *De officiis* 3.10.45 (Atzert, 99).

144. Latini *Trésor* 2.122.13, quoting Seneca *Epistulae morales* 9.19 (Hense, 25) and then 2.122.14, perhaps alluding to Prov. 1:7.

145. Cicero *De amicitia* 17 (Simbeck, 22).

seen there—and all ranks, high, middling, and low. He did not slip quickly among them, like a cock on hot coals,<sup>146</sup> to avoid being bored by hearing them, or direct his followers to “take their petitions,” as if he took no account of them; rather, he himself stopped there. He heard them all out in turn, had their petitions read out, and gave them a very kind answer. And if there were matters which required forethought or longer deliberation, he commanded them that those petitions be presented to him again at the proper time and place. He acted similarly where almsgiving was involved, and thus dealt with all matters expeditiously. As a result of this he was greatly loved by those around him; and not only by them, but by all those who, having had dealings with him, were full of praise, no matter who they were. Together with this, in the giving of alms (the first part of largesse, as discussed above) that good lord was never wanting. For as I hold in good faith, this has never been so well demonstrated in any other king within memory. This is still apparent to the world, and always will be, principally in the fine churches he founded and generously endowed in Paris and elsewhere: such as the church of the Celestines which is so beautiful, with its great house of friars that he endowed generously by liquidation of debts. He also endowed the church of Saint Antoine inside Paris, and established friars there. Similarly, he enlarged and greatly modified the church of Sainte Catherine at Val-des-Ecoliers, and improved it greatly. Likewise the church of Saint Paul beside his residence. Further, he greatly improved the Hôtel-Dieu and gave great alms there.

Similarly, he generously helped the four mendicant orders to improve and enlarge their churches, and often gave fine alms to the convents. And similarly with many others, as he was never lacking in the building of churches, hospitals, and other alms that were asked of him, which added up to a great amount each year.

Likewise, outside Paris, in the forest of Vincennes, he endowed canons with very good rents, also the good men near the palace of Biauté. For the Carthusians he modified the buildings and made many improvements, and modified other churches and chapels, and added buildings and improvements. And I promise you that these were not the only good deeds and almsgiving he performed: for what do you think? The poor scholars and students supported by him, mendicant friars and others, religious and secular, and those who had to put on a feast for their graduation—it was nothing if not wonderful, that he gave so great a quantity of alms, and that no one was excluded from his generosity. Similarly, do you think he failed other

146. The usual form of this simile is “comme chat sur braise” (like a cat on hot coals).

poor men, such as poor gentlemen, old and confused, or broken by war? Alas! But in that time they did not go without: the men of that time had found their father, as it were. If only there were such a prince reigning now! O, what relief there was for poor gentlewomen—widows and others. For orphans too; and in brief, for all poor wretches who sought it. But what is more, do you think the good king, who was compassionate, and in all things circumspect and clear-sighted, forgot the poor and lowly companions of his court? He certainly did not. It was his custom always to carry in his purse a hundred francs or more in gold. Sometimes he saw one of those poor lads who carry the logs, or others he saw from his windows working here and there in his court, and he called some who it seemed to him were working hard, from among those who never dared to ask for anything or speak to him, asked them if they were married, and inquired how they went. And he gave to them generously from the money in his purse, more to one, less to another—according to how well his discretion told him it would be best used, and according to the responsibilities and households of the said poor men; and he told them to approach him from time to time. They were most comforted, and prayed to God with all their hearts for him.

In such a way did this very good prince back up the words that he spoke with action. In the presence of the knights and his company, where it happened that they were freely discoursing on many things before him, as the custom is to speak out before princes on many subjects, one of his barons said what a noble thing and great happiness lordship was. The King replied that he knew of only one good in it; and as those who heard him had a great desire to know what he meant, and asked him about it at once, he answered that it was the power to do good for others, and that all the rest was not glory, but a burden.

O, that lofty utterance: and how noble in a prince! Worthy of being remembered and noted well. How it had pleased God that you, and all the princes and powerful men in the world, had indeed remembered it.

27

**Concerning the fine works the abovementioned king commanded,  
and how he made the people prosper**

Be mindful, I beg, of what stock you  
are created, and keep the honor of your  
fatherland. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*.<sup>147</sup>

147. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.543, 548 (Anderson, 71): “este, precor, memores, qua sitis stirpe creati, . . . et patrium retinete decus.”



With regard to the examples I have given you of your good grandfather King Charles, Ovid speaks the above words to you, Louis, his grandson: “Remember your predecessors and maintain the honor they have acquired for you.”<sup>148</sup> Be pleased to retain these words, and you will be the better for it. And further, on the subject of largesse treated above, we can show how in all things his great benevolence, largesse, and love toward his people were demonstrated by the various benefits he provided for them, such as by making all the artisans prosper through the fine things he commanded. I mean the distinguished and sturdy buildings and other works where people were constantly employed: for where is another king found who built so much? For example, after the churches mentioned above he built the castle of the Louvre, in Paris, which is very fine. He greatly enlarged and modified his residence of Saint Paul. Similarly, at several of the gates of Paris he commissioned the fine buildings that are now established there: like the fortress of Saint Antoine, although it was completed later, which is a very fine castle. He greatly improved the palace and constructed several buildings according to his taste, as well as many fine rooms. Similarly, the new walls around Paris and their fine high towers, whose construction he committed to the charge of Hugh Obriot, then provost of Paris; and the new bridge of Saint Michel was begun by him, as well as the Petit Pont. Similarly, outside Paris, the very fine castle of the Forest of Vincennes, the palace of Biauté, the palaces of Plaisance and of Saint Ouen, the castle of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Craill Montargis (with such a fine hall), the castle of Melun almost all new, and many others that were made or repaired by him.<sup>149</sup> These buildings are so fine, beautiful, and sturdy, that anyone who thinks about it will realize that they required great expense and many workers, and this demonstrates the liberality and largesse of the good lord in that he wanted all manner of people to prosper through him. Furthermore, with whom but the king did the merchants, both local and foreign, then do most business, supplying him with all kinds of goods, whether for the provisioning of his household, or for his ceremonial regalia or other things with noble jewels and rich gold cloth, goldsmiths’ work, and other rich things on which he spent money? For did he not have made the richest crown France had ever seen, which cost an extraordinary amount from the treasury? And likewise

<sup>148</sup>. See preceding note.

<sup>149</sup>. This passage repeats information concerning Charles V’s prudence as an artist and architect from *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.11 (Solente, 2:37–41). For a discussion of Christine’s representation of Charles as artist and architect, see Julia Simms Holderness, “Castles in the Air? The Prince as Conceptual Artist,” in Green and Mews, *Healing the Body Politic*, 161–76.

the ceremonial crown, enriched with a great ruby that was said to have cost thirty thousand francs. He had all the royal coronation apparel, right down to the shoes, remade richer than it had ever been, as can be seen in the treasury at Saint Denis where they are kept. Similarly, he was always having golden crosses made, along with other rich reliquaries and large images, decorated with jewels, and all kinds of church and chapel ornaments, rich chasubles decorated with pearls, and all kinds of coverings, which he generously gave often and liberally to several churches, canonries, and chapels. He himself had the richest chapel that any king of France is ever said to have had. But as far as payment is concerned, if anyone doubted it, whatever the expenditure, there was no failure whatsoever in settling the bill.

28

**Concerning the great burdens and commitments the said King Charles made in expenses and outlays, and how in spite of this everything was fairly provided for in the matter of payment and expenditure**

It seems sufficiently praiseworthy, that branches should feel alleviation from their root. Guido, in the Introduction to his *Summa*.<sup>150</sup>

The words presented above can be understood in relation to our subject, as saying it is apt that a branch issuing from and nourished by good root stock should be good. Because this matter concerns you, now hear more about your grandfather, noble Louis, and learn from his example what fine and good government is, and how to keep order and maintain everything in its proper condition. Take note also of the outlays and expenses described above, and along with them the great cost necessary to sustain such large land and sea forces for so long a time, as has already been mentioned: not just for one or two years, but almost as long as he reigned, which was about twenty-three years. The soldiers were so well paid—and the captains so well satisfied, as much with rich gifts, for God knows that there nothing was spared, as with their salaries and wages—that none left or made a complaint because of failure of payment, and all were well equipped. But this great expense was not the only one. Just consider how at the same time the buildings already mentioned were being constructed, the translations of books mentioned before were being

<sup>150</sup>. Unidentified in Guido Faba.

undertaken, and many other costly projects, without any failure of payment anywhere. What is more, with all these things that should be noted, he placed in his coffers many rich and noble jewels, and gold coins, as plenty of people know from the treasure that was found after his death. Let none say that, in order to achieve this, many cutbacks had to be made in the state he maintained: or that his court was otherwise not well served, or that the expenses of his residence were not paid, or that there were few gentlemen or servants and they were meanly turned out, or that he gave no gifts, or that no one was advanced in station by him, as is done nowadays and as lords commonly do for those they hold in favor. For I will reply truthfully, and let no one think the contrary, that never since the time of Charlemagne was there a king in France who held court with such magnificence—with all the nobles in great array, and royal ceremonies—nor one who gave more handsome gifts or so exalted and enriched people with lordships, lands, and goods as this king did. Not just one or two people, but a great number, as is clear to their heirs (who need not be named), and of all ranks, etc. There are many still living who know this.

There are some who say that he did not give his brothers and those of his blood generous allowances or lavish gifts, as has been done since, and that when they came to see him at the end of one or two years, if he gave them five hundred or a thousand francs in one sum, they were well pleased with it, and he wanted them to return to their lands without making a long stay. Saving the grace of those that say this, I say it is not to be believed that he, very wise and generous to all, who loved his brothers most dearly, and kept them occupied in his service almost continually—as anyone who does not believe me can learn from the chronicles—would have rewarded them worse than a simple knight who approached him, given their rank and the love he had for them.

29

### Concerning the ways the said king had of honoring foreigners

Note the two parts of usefulness, soundness and power. Soundness is safe and whole strengthening of well-being; power is the faculty of keeping one's own things and of obtaining other things that are similar. Seneca, *On Benefits*.<sup>151</sup>

151. Not Seneca, but Cicero *De inventione* 2.56.169, ed. E. Stroebel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1915), 115: “quare utilitatis duae partes videntur esse, incolumitas et potentia. Incolumitas est salutis *rata* atque integra *conservatio*; potentia est ad sua conservanda et alterius adtenuanda idonearum rerum facultas.”

It is to you Louis, noble youth of France, that the Latin words of Seneca above may be addressed. They can be explained as saying that if you examine the elements of what is profitable, you will find two. One is security, which we can understand as prosperity, and the other is power or lordship. This profit can apply in respect of great lords, for Seneca further suggests that prosperity in a prince obtains when he is firmly and without division master of his estates, in secure and complete tranquility: and this is the well-being that is proper to him. Power, which is the other part of profit, is manifest when a prince has so acted by his own good sense and foresight that he has attracted to himself all things that will help him to keep and defend his estates, and to assist others who might ask him if the need arises. These favorable things are: very good friends, at home and abroad; strong and powerful knights; wealth to sustain the expense; and all other things that are proper and useful in overcoming enemies. With these, such a lord can call himself powerful.

O youth of France, most fair and gracious (may God make you perfect!), please always remember how well your wise grandfather understood these two aspects of profit. That is why he drew to himself everything that could be of service: he acquired friends to the extent that such a benefit could be useful. First, in the matter of foreigners, how well did he honor them, and who ever gave them richer or more abundant gifts to attract them, and from whom did they part more pleased? And to do this more properly, did he not have knights of his own at court, to honor, receive, and fete the foreign visitors? Such as the count of Estampes who was of his own blood, and others: the Lord of La Rivière, who by his eloquence and gracious welcome was so good at receiving visitors that he behaved just as the minister of such a lord should, and was well rewarded by the king who knew him to deserve it, which can still be seen; and others of whom it would take too long to tell, whom he had accompany the said foreign visitors and fete them in their houses.<sup>152</sup> With fair assemblies of ladies and young girls, presenting his gifts to each according to his rank, he honored them and had his knights honor them—and had them accompany them to his castle, to see what guard and fine artillery there was in the palace; to the Sainte Chapelle also, and to Saint Denis in France, to see the relics and the treasury, which is such a noble thing. Similarly, he also wanted them to see the queen and his fair children: their way of life and its regulation, which was very fine in all respects. What

152. The count of Estampes and Bureau de la Rivière are also described thus in *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.32 (Solente, 2:87–88), and Bureau's part in the reception of the emperor is emphasized in 3.33 (2:89–90).

more can I tell you, good lord? I promise you that by such and similar actions his name was carried throughout the world. There is no doubt that accomplishing such works necessitated great expenditure, yet no one should think there was any scarcity as a result. What is more, I tell you it is certain that he never in his life imposed a poll tax, nor had one collected for any reason; nor was any new tax imposed. And let no one think that the levies, salt taxes, and duties were instituted by him: for truly they dated from before he was born, from the earliest wars, and indeed the good lord had the intention of abolishing them as soon as the war had ended. He even lowered the salt tax and other charges when his son Charles, your father who is reigning now, was born, which was higher than it had ever been, and several high tariffs on wine and other things. I say in conclusion, therefore, that it is not without cause if we marvel today at how all these things could have been supplied, given that at the present time we in France are not so oppressed by wars with the English as we were then. Nor were the revenues so great then as they are now, because several regions which he subsequently liberated were still occupied by the English, and it would seem impossible to accomplish a third of what he did. For this reason, all things considered, we may conclude that it was through good management by his own good sense, and his goodness and perfect prudence. Thus it is fitting to say of him in the words of Saint Bernard: “Dull gold is worth more than gleaming copper.”<sup>153</sup>

30

### Concerning the largesse of the king and his discreet way of giving gifts

Let us beware lest we send superfluous gifts, like books to a rustic. Seneca, *On Benefits*.<sup>154</sup>

Seneca says above that we should be careful not to send gifts where they will not be properly used, just as would happen if fine books were sent to peasants and people of little understanding. All this can be applied to the said King Charles, since he was sensible in all things concerning what should be avoided because of the evil it will do, and what should be done for the good.

153. Latini *Trésor* 2.52.8, quoting an unidentified proverb.

154. Seneca *De beneficiis* 1.11.6 (Hosius, 16): “*utique cavebimus, ne munera supervacua mittamus, ut feminae aut seni arma venatoria, ut rustico libros, ut studiis ac litteris dedito retia.*”

It can also apply to the order he kept in the matter of giving or using his gifts, which you may be sure, while it was most generous, was always done in an orderly and discreet way, just as it should be. So he always had enough to keep giving, as the wise man says where he teaches that gifts should be given with such moderation that one always has enough to continue. Since it hurts a generous man greatly when he no longer has anything to give away, it is better to give what is possible, than with a great liberality that must fall short. This is why we said in the first part of this book that discretion is the mother of virtues, since the others need to be governed by her or else they will turn into vices. And therefore, by way of conclusion to what has been said about that wise king (and may it please you always to have his manners in mind as an example of how to conduct yourself well and wisely), we can recognize in him, along with his other virtues, the regulation of his most discreet largesse: he always distributed it generously, as has been said, yet never failed to continue doing so. This was seen from the visit of his uncle the emperor of Rome to Paris, which was such a notable event that, even if after it he had done nothing more, it was something to note down and remember. For after all, who today could make such an outlay as was employed in welcoming him with such honor and magnificent generosity of ceremony and gifts? So greatly and nobly was everything arranged: and it was so costly, with no expense spared, that it was nothing short of a marvel. For such gifts there were—of gold, silver, all kinds of jewels and precious stones, tapestry, vessels and all sorts of ornaments, and noble things given as presents. There was such sustained largesse—not only to the said emperor and his son, the King of Bohemia, and their barons, knights and gentlemen, but, let me tell you, there was hardly even the lowliest servant who did not receive at least a gilded goblet or a covered tankard. And all expenses were paid from the day the emperor set foot in France until he left, which was a great length of time; and every day there was rich feasting, presented in different forms, as many people still living know, who saw it with their own eyes. I promise you that the cost must have amounted to a great sum, yet be assured that although this was at the time of his wars when he had the most to do, never was there any loan taken from the burghers, nor tax imposed on the people. I have spoken more fully about these matters elsewhere, so that anyone who wants can see more about the arrangements for this visit in the book of his deeds and good conduct that was made at the command of the most noble prince, Duke Philip of Burgundy, brother of the said King. It is from the account and truthful reports that he had given to me that I know all these things.<sup>155</sup>

155. *Fais et bonnes meurs* 3.33–48 (Solente, 2:89–130).

### Here begins consideration of the virtue of truthfulness, and how a prince should possess it

Truth in every season is the same. What is deceptive has nothing solid. Lying is meager; it [truth] will shine if you inspect it closely. Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, 4.10.<sup>156</sup>

It remains for us to speak about the virtue of truthfulness, which is the seventh of those I have said were proper to you—noble son of a king. In the passage quoted above praising this virtue, Seneca means that all its parts are true and good. This means that everything done, thought, and accomplished through it should be accepted as right and true: not only should a man's words be true, but similarly his intentions and all he does. On the other hand he suggests that deceptions or falsehoods fall away to nothing: something feigned and appearing to be other than it really is will not last, and will be seen through by the wise and clear-sighted, who will be wary of it. Since following the way of this virtue for the sake of its nobility, and fleeing the path of falsehood on account of its baseness and repugnance, pertains just as much to a prince as to any other man, Jesus son of Sirach said: "Let true speech come before all deeds."<sup>157</sup> This is to be understood as saying: "Let truth be to the fore in everything you have to do," since there is nothing more to be reviled, nor so insulting, nor worse thought of, nor more repugnant than to say that a prince is a liar. One finds that in former times a prince would never, even to avoid death or other loss, speak falsely or act in contradiction to his word; and quite rightly, for the title of ruler and prince is the highest rank there can be in the world, and it is quite reasonable that someone who has such an exalted position should be believed before all others and his word be given credence, since this is his prerogative. But if such a man should be found in the normal run of things not to speak truthfully and to be a liar, his word and promise unreliable, who would believe him? By God, no one would. And quite rightly, since he could not be trusted; and what could one say of such a prince, around the world? By God, that he was a liar, a deceiver, not to be trusted, and full of trickery with his fair words full of falsehood; so other princes would not trust him enough to make peace agreements, truces, or

156. Seneca *Epistulae morales* 79.18 (Hense, 303): "veritas in omnem partem sui eadem est. Quae decipiunt, nihil habent solidi. Tenuē est mendacium: perlucet, si diligenter inspexeris."

157. Latini *Trésor* 2.63.1, quoting *Ecclus.* 37:20.

alliances with him, because they would not have confidence that he would keep them. Because of this he would end up without honor, without peace, and without friends, subjects, or anyone else, because they would know what he was like; for it is to be presumed (and is commonly found) that a man, whoever he is, who is full of the vice of lying is not without other crimes, and should be suspected of treason, of which falsehood is the cloak. That is why this vice of lying is so dishonorable in a prince, as we have seen; in any person, the habit is not good even in small things, since without fail those who become accustomed to lying about these will move on to greater ones. Of this truth, so approved by the Savior and praised as paramount by all good people, Seneca said: “Love truth above all things, and you will be close to God—who is the real truth.”<sup>158</sup> And he said further: “The simple words of one who follows truth at all times are always believed, because the opposite is never seen in him; but the liar on the other hand, if by chance he tells the truth, is not believed because he is more often lying than telling the truth.”<sup>159</sup> People say of such a man that he is nothing but a trickster or a mountebank; and therefore, because you see truth in a prince extolled, the right course of action is to become accustomed to speaking it. Consequently, it should also be understood that it is not proper for a prince to strengthen his word with oaths. It happens that those who swear great oaths by God or His saints do it so that greater credence will be lent to their word because they suppose that what they say will not be believed otherwise, but this is never the case for a great lord. Therefore it is not suitable for him to do it, nor even for any important person. The reason for this is, as has been said, that it is proper that the words of the prince be believed without being strengthened by an oath, for his authority requires that he speak the truth, and this leads one to assume that he is truthful.

32

**Here is shown how wrong it is that the vice of lying is so common in all the estates**

Before all actions, let a true word  
come forth from you. Ecclesiasticus,  
Chapter 37.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>158</sup>. Unidentified in Seneca; cf. Cassiodorus *Expositio Psalmorum*, Ps. 30, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 97 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1958), 263.

<sup>159</sup>. Seneca *Epistulae morales* 40.4 (Hense, 121).

<sup>160</sup>. Ecclus. 37:20: “ante omnem operam verbum verax praecedat te et ante omnem actum consilium stabile.”



And so, good prince, following the words of Ecclesiasticus, let truth in your deeds go before any undertaking, in such a way that it may be an example to all your father's subjects (and yours in due course), of all estates, so as to correct in them the vice of falsehood, which is so common at present in this kingdom among all kinds of people that one searching for truth will scarcely find any. O, what a fault and stain it is on the reputation of such a prominent country!—and all this is a failure of foresight. For if falsehood were hated by the great, and if they took seriously the damage that it does and the way it is communicated by bad example from one to another—from the great to the middling, and from the middling to the lesser—and the evil and harm that come from it, the king would surely act, and the princes after him, so that it would be less widely practised in their courts and offices.

Today it is even seen in all the courts of justice, being practised by those who lead and prosecute cases—to such an extent that it seems to have become part of the normal style of the law, by which people are given the run-around, to the great harm of the king and of the polity. In truth, anyone with experience of it knows this. These errors and faults could easily be guarded against.

And how much falsehood is used also in the other royal offices!—apart, however from the heads of finance and their people. There it is nothing short of normal procedure, for whoever wants to get possession of the calf<sup>161</sup> needs to use it, nothing else will do. And there are those who say that it is right to act this way; but, with due respect to them, I think that with good management there would never be any need to practise falsehood so much, in this and other areas. For why in this kingdom, which is so renowned for all sorts of knowledge, could not the method of payment be followed that is used in England and everywhere else, where finance officials do not have to be pestered, as they do here? There is no doubt that the king's needs and the common good would be served better—even though it seems to those who are used to it that one cannot be involved in trading or any other business without resorting to duplicity, which is nothing other than covering up falsehood, trickery, and mendacious fraud with great boldly perjured oaths. As Tully says, since it does not befit a man to lie, deceive, or speak evil for whatever reason, a good man's reputation should not as a result be lost through greed. And as for these dreadful oaths—which are used more,

161. *B* reads “qui veult avoir du veau la baille” (literally “whoever wants to control the calf”), while *P* reads “du beau la bataille,” which makes little sense. Christine's meaning is obscure, particularly her apparent exception of financial officers. She may intend a reference to the Golden Calf (Exod. 32); in any case, it seems clear from the context that it is talking about control of money.

I believe, in this kingdom than anywhere else—and denials, curses, and such detestable things as have been mentioned, allowing Christians to use them is a lack of faith and of fear of God. Many ill effects come from this by divine justice, and it does no good to anyone.

On this subject Cassiodorus said: “O, why is truth so despised, seeing that she is none other than the warrior against falsehood?”<sup>162</sup> And Solomon said that a liar is worse than a thief because it is possible to protect oneself against the latter, but difficult to do so against the former.<sup>163</sup> May God therefore grant that you consider these things, so that you may remedy them.

## 33

### Concerning the ordering and manner of fair eloquence in a prince

Nothing is so distinguished or so magnificent that it does not want to be tempered through moderation. Valerius Maximus, Book 4.1.<sup>164</sup>

In the passage quoted above, Valerius means that there is nothing so perfectly beautiful, grand, and magnificent as that which is done with temperance and moderation. And this is why, most noble prince, when speaking above of the virtue of truthfulness, the subject of eloquence and public speaking has come to my mind. Since it is of supreme importance for a prince to be eloquent, and of refined and temperate speech, I should like to touch on this—not from my own knowledge, but only what the great authors say when they praise it without reserve, especially in a prince. Aristotle says in his *Politics* that there is nothing whatsoever that does not require to be governed in an orderly way.<sup>165</sup> Because eloquence is the ornament of the world, the embellishment or adornment of the body, and the representation of man’s understanding, and because it is something that is important and can be of great value, it is right that rules should be followed in its practice. It is said, then, that to speak well and beautifully there are four principles to bear in mind: the first is quality, the second is quantity, the third is speed,

162. Latini *Trésor* 2.63.2, quoting Cassiodorus *Variae* 3.3 (CCSL 96:388–89): “Pessima consuetudo est despiciere ueritatem.”

163. Latini *Trésor* 2.63.1, quoting Ecclus. 20:27.

164. Valerius Maximus *Dicta et facta* 4.1.9 (Briscoe, 229).

165. Cf. Aristotle *Politica* 1.2.1253c (AL 29.1:4).

and the fourth is slowness.<sup>166</sup> In quality there are five points for the speaker to consider: first, who he is; second, whom he wishes to address; third, on what subject he wishes to speak; fourth, how much time he has to speak; fifth, what result he wishes to achieve and how his words may be received. For the first of these points touching on quality, the speaker should begin by directing his mind to his station and capacity. For if he is a king or sovereign prince it is appropriate for him to use other words than would a man of lesser rank, and similarly from degree to degree, each according to his capacity, every man who wishes to speak should bear this in mind. But it is fitting for the prince to adopt a graver, grander, and more lordly way of speaking, and to make his introduction with matters of weight if the subject requires it: not arrogantly or menacingly, from pride, throwing his head back and lifting his eyebrows like a frightened beast, but speaking moderately like a lord, with a fair and noble manner. This grand style is not fitting for everyone.<sup>167</sup> The second of the five points concerns whom he is addressing, for the way a prince should speak to his peers or those slightly inferior to him is different, and involves a different type of language, from the way he speaks to his own subjects: to them he should speak and command according to their rank and station, and how they are bound to him. For the third point, the subject on which he wishes to speak, he should prepare in his mind in advance the order of what he wants to say: let him give the premise of his discourse succinctly to begin with, then his main part, which is the substance of his speech; then the conclusion comes after. All this should be done in such a way that he does not give his reasons back-to-front, nor say superfluous things unrelated to the topic, so that he forgets where he is going and stops in the middle, bewildered, not knowing how to get out. All of these things are most unattractive in public speaking. For the fourth point, which is the amount of time he has, he should consider whether an urgent matter or other situation calling for brevity obliges him to use few words, and organize the substance of his subject as succinctly as he can. For the fifth point, the end he wishes to pursue, he should consider what it is that moves him to speak, and the final objective at which he is taking aim; and because words resemble arrows—swiftly spoken and never retrievable<sup>168</sup>—he should not say anything too judgmental, which could have a harmful effect or even

166. Cf. Latini *Trésor* 2.66.1: “Por ce doit la meniere & la mesure dou parleur estre de .v. choses, ce est en parleure & en isnellet & en tardess & en qualité & en quantité.”

167. Cf. Latini *Trésor* 2.66.2–3.

168. *P* has “retraictes”; Willard keeps *B* reading “traictées.”

give rise to reproach; if he delivers his words audibly let them be such as to be understood only as he intended. And let him speak in such a way that his words will stir the hearts of his hearers and win them to his cause—which we deal with more fully next.

34

### More concerning the ordering of speech according to the science of rhetoric

If knowledge is without usefulness, it is of little benefit, usefulness however with knowledge can be of great benefit. Boethius, *On the Instruction of Students*.<sup>169</sup>

Knowledge without practice is worthless, says Boethius, but with practice it is good. I quote this still in relation to fair speech, my lord, because although it has its own art and science called rhetoric, it would be little use only to know all of its theory and not be adept at its use. But because it would be too long and difficult for me to articulate in full, even if I knew how to, I have at least put down a few simple things briefly so that anyone listening may more quickly learn and put into practice what is contained in this science—concerning what is seemingly, both in fair eloquence and manner of speaking, and in the good arrangement of discourse. Thus Tully says in his *Rhetoric*, praising eloquence and facility with words, that if it happened that a man could not claim his words to be fine or polished, yet if he did know how to proffer them graciously, in an attractive manner, and effectively,<sup>170</sup> they would be praised; but if he spoke them without any order, even though the subject was a fine one it would never be pleasing to hear. And for this reason, he says afterwards that you must regulate and temper your voice, your mind, and all the movements of your body and tongue, to trim the words coming out of your mouth so that they are neither overblown nor distorted by speaking too loudly or with a violent tone of voice: the words not harsh when you open your lips, but sounding well enunciated, smooth, and clear, with every letter that should be sounded having its sound sweetly—and each word its level, which should be between high and low,

169. Ps.-Boethius *De disciplina scoliarium* 1.14, ed. O. Weijers (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 98: “*Sicut enim prudentia sine iusticia parum vel nichil prodest, iusticia sine prudentia multum, sic sine usu scientia parum, usus autem sine scientia multum.*”

170. Latini *Trésor* 2.66.1; cf. Cicero *De inventione* 1.18.25 (Stroebel, 23).

but lower at the beginning than at the end. All these things, however, should be modified according to changes of place, things, purposes, and time;<sup>171</sup> for there are some things one should relate simply, others gently, others with disdain, others with pity, others with joy, and so on—in such a way that posture and facial expression are always in accord with the subject of which you speak. On this Horace said: “Speak sad words to the sad, joyful words to the joyful, words of vengeance or threats to the wrathful, and be careful not to speak frivolously in council.”<sup>172</sup> For Tully said it is idle and unwise to speak foolishly and irrelevantly when weighty matters are being discussed.<sup>173</sup> This is why Pericles the provost was reprovved in council when he began speaking of the beauty of a youth he saw passing by.<sup>174</sup> And let your posture be such, he says, that your head is held straight, not directed up to the sky or down toward the ground, but looking straight at those to whom you are speaking. Do not twist your lips or open them too wide, nor wink one or both eyes—nor glare, frown, bare your teeth, or raise your hands, lest it be inappropriate.

We have said in the preceding chapter that the second thing to attend to in fine speech is quantity, and on this subject Macrobius said that more is better in all things except words. Therefore one should most especially guard against excess, for there is nothing more tedious than listening to incessant talking. For this reason Tully said: “You will please everyone if you speak little and do many good deeds.” The Apostle said concerning this: “Be quick to listen and slow to speak.”<sup>175</sup> And as Solomon said: “In every man who is quick to speak, it must be supposed that there is less wisdom and more folly.”<sup>176</sup> Cassiodorus, approving this, said: “It is a royal virtue to run slowly into words and quickly into listening.”<sup>177</sup> Seneca said on the same theme, as if speaking to highly placed men: “Take care that your words are not frivolous, since it is not fitting for a prince to speak of foolish things”; and: “Let your words not be worthless but always used to counsel, induce, command, or admonish.”<sup>178</sup> Therefore, so that your speech

171. Latini *Trésor* 2.66.2; cf. Cicero *De inventione* 1.18.25 (Stroebel, 23).

172. Latini *Trésor* 2.75.2, quoting Horace *De arte poetica* 105 in *Opera*, ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1995), 315.

173. Latini *Trésor* 2.75.2: “Vicieuse chose est es hautes besoignes dire mous de solas.” Unattributed, but from Cicero *De officiis* 1.40.141 (Atzert, 41).

174. Latini *Trésor* 2.75.2, quoting Cicero *De officiis* 1.40.141 (Atzert, 41).

175. Latini *Trésor* 2.66.4, quoting James 1:19.

176. Latini *Trésor* 2.66.4, quoting Prov. 29:20.

177. Latini *Trésor* 2.66.4, quoting Cassiodorus *Variae* 10.4 (CCSL 96, line 48).

178. Latini *Trésor* 2.63.6, quoting ps.-Seneca [Martin of Braga] *Formula vitae honestae* 2 (Barlow, 239).

does not fatigue the audience, you will make it as brief as you can, without compromising the substance of what you want to say, so that there is no superfluity. Nevertheless Seneca also said: “Take care that this brevity be not so great as to obscure the quality of your words and the point you want to make.”<sup>179</sup> Similarly, as far as speed of speech is concerned, one should take care that it is not too rapid: since when there is too much haste there cannot be order, and it is not pleasing to listen to, but rather confusing and difficult to understand. Similarly, when slowness is to be used in reciting, the words should be well placed, for just as haste is not effective, neither is pausing too long between one word and the next, as if one were listening to oneself speak, and toiling over one’s utterances. They should therefore be well placed and connected. And above all, said Tully, readily use good words that are sensible and peaceful, for kind words are cause for friendship and rough words the opposite. He said, therefore, to epitomize what has been said before: since well-ordered eloquence is like honey, or the very life-blood, flowing from the speaker, be quick to use good words that are well joined, honest, clear, simple, well ordered, and in plain language; and keep a reserved expression, without laughing too much or looking angry.<sup>180</sup>

35

### In praise of economy in speech

Silence is a sign of wisdom and loquacity a sign of foolishness; do not hurry to reply until there has been an end to questioning. Aristotle.<sup>181</sup>

Aristotle means here that remaining quiet, or readily falling silent, is the sign of a wise man, and the opposite is true of a man who talks incessantly. It is as if he meant to continue: “Therefore do not rush to speak or to respond before you have understood the point of the question, or what you should say.” Most noble lord, because his speech is the thing which reveals most about the habit and state of mind of a man, by which he is judged well or badly according to the words that commonly come out of his mouth—as the well-known proverb says, “He who comes from the soil speaks of the

179. Not in fact Seneca, but an adaptation of Latini himself in *Trésor* 2.62.10.

180. Latini *Trésor* 2.65.3, quoting Cicero *De amicitia* 40 (Simbeck, 62).

181. Not Aristotle, but attributed to “the philosopher” by Petrus Alphonsi, *Disciplina clericalis*, ed. and trans. Ángel González Palencia (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1948), 8: “Ne festines respondere donec fuerit finis interrogationis.”

soil”—and because what is in the heart makes the mouth speak,<sup>182</sup> it is most necessary, especially for people in high positions, to be knowledgeable about speaking. Not just in taking care that it be well organized, as we have talked about above, but in not saying anything that should be kept quiet, or anything unsuitable or open to reproach as foolish or bad. And so, revered prince, do not find it tedious if I am a little prolix on this subject, for as a wise man said, you cannot say too much on something about which too little is said. Speaking of this, it seems to me that wisdom in speech lies in two principal things: one is in speaking wisely, and the other is in wisely keeping silent, and the one goes with the other. Seneca said: “He who does not know how to speak does not know how to refrain from speaking.” Speaking wisely is always saying sensible things on everything you want to speak about. One should know, as Seneca said, that speaking should not go on for any length unless it is for one of five purposes: to teach others; to advise and induce to do good; to ask a question in order to be instructed or advised; to give a command that is reasonable and that one has a right to give; or to report honorable and true things. At the same time though, nature, reason, and right give ample license for joyous and merry things to be spoken of in games and entertainments—provided that one takes care not to exceed the bounds of reason, which could lead to foolish or dishonest words being spoken. We should consider which people a person wanting to emulate the good and valiant ought to be ready to consort with, and which he should avoid. On this matter, so that it may be treated more authoritatively, it will be enough to report what the authors say, without adding anything of mine. The Psalmist said: “Frequent the good and you will be like them, and likewise for the bad.” Sallust: “Let your words be addressed to the wise, so that their reply will add to your knowledge.” Solomon said: “Seek advice on what you have to do from someone who is experienced in the matter, for the expert must be believed in his field.” The proverb next to this says: “Do not see or speak evil,” and because danger can come from spoken words, do not let them out if they should be kept quiet.

Similarly, on the subject of those whom it is better to avoid, it seems to me that there are three kinds of wicked people whom the authors advise especially against having too much to do with: fools who cling obstinately to their foolishness through contempt for knowledge and learning; those who get drunk; and the third, those who speak with scorn, mocking, and detraction. Tully said of this that acquaintance with a fool cannot be good

182. Cf. Matt. 12:34, Luke 6:45.

because one can learn nothing good from him nor become better as a result. And if anyone tries to teach a fool, the instruction will be scorned. Thus a wise man said: "Since acquaintance with a fool cannot be good in any way, it is better to avoid it." Jesus son of Sirach said: "Words spoken to a sleeping man are no more wasted than correction of a fool." Solomon: "Correct the fool, he will hate you for it; correct the wise man, he will love you,"<sup>183</sup> and he said furthermore: "A fool sees nothing but foolishness, so trying to teach him is no use," and "a speech that is not heard is like a harp made out of lead."<sup>184</sup> He also said: "The wise man keeps quiet till the time is right, but the fool knows no season." And therefore a philosopher, when asked why he was so quiet, whether it was through wisdom or foolishness, answered: "A fool cannot keep quiet." Solomon says it is a sign of foolishness to reply before hearing all of the question.<sup>185</sup>

Similarly, acquaintance with those who get drunk is bad for several reasons: one is that it is a vice that sets a bad example; another is that they are dangerous in their drunkenness and cause disturbances; the third, that then they say things they know about people and things they do not know. And therefore the wise man said: "Do not tell your secret to a man who gets drunk, since drunkenness can hide nothing." And for that reason those who are underhanded ask drunkards questions. Jesus son of Sirach said that he held a drunkard to be no better than someone who would sell his own intelligence in the marketplace for wine. And he said that in many countries such people are not accepted as witnesses.<sup>186</sup> Similarly, the company of slanderers, detractors, and mockers is bad, says Seneca. And therefore the prophet said: "A man who is quarrelsome and a nuisance can cause upheaval in a whole country with his words." Jesus the son of Sirach: "Nothing is more dreadful in a city nor more dangerous in a community than a seditious man and informer, and anyone who speaks with him is acting as if he were throwing oil on a dangerous fire to make it flare up."<sup>187</sup> Tully said: "Detractors should be avoided more than the barking of dogs," and Macrobius said of them: "Mockers and detractors are punished by their own vices, for what they say of others is said of themselves." And the Apostle said: "A man who judges others condemns himself." And later he said: "You reprove others and do not

183. *Latini Trésor* 2.64.6, quoting Prov. 9:8.

184. Cf. *Latini Trésor* 2.64.5, quoting Prov. 23:9.

185. Cf. *Latini Trésor* 2.67.2, quoting Prov. 18:13.

186. *Latini Trésor* 2.64.10; cf. *Ecclus.* 31:25–42.

187. Cf. *Latini Trésor* 2.64.7–8, quoting *Ecclus.* 9:25.



teach yourself.”<sup>188</sup> And since mocking words are distasteful he said: “Do not mock your friend since it is displeasing to any man to be mocked, and once love is lost it is difficult to regain.” Pericles: “Whoever makes known the vices of others will soon hear his own talked about.”<sup>189</sup> And thus the master teaches his disciple: “Take care that in what you say there is nothing against your neighbor, for he is your brother.” But Cato said: “It is a bad thing for a master when he is tainted with the fault he reprimands others for.”<sup>190</sup>

Similarly, the other kind of wisdom in speaking, mentioned before, is to know when to be silent. Solomon said: “A bridle is better in a man’s mouth than a horse’s,” which means, keep a tight rein on your speech. The wise man said: “Be suspicious of anyone who questions you about your private business if he is not your friend; and whoever he is, find out his condition before you tell him anything, and be on your guard.” Jesus son of Sirach said: “If there is a dangerous secret you cannot ask advice about, do not tell anyone; for it is safer to be silent than to ask someone else to keep quiet.” And the wise man said: “As long as you keep your secret quiet it is locked away, but as soon as you have revealed it you are in the power of the one you have told it to.”<sup>191</sup> Therefore Seneca said: “If you do not command yourself to keep quiet, how can you ask another to; and if you are not able to keep a secret, who will keep yours?”<sup>192</sup>

## 36

**How it ill becomes a prince to be enraged and speak in fury**

Then you shall possess the good omens  
by right, when you are able to be your  
own king. Claudian.<sup>193</sup>

Claudianus said, as if he were speaking to you, good prince, that you will rule others rightfully when you are king and master of yourself. The import of these words, which apply supremely well to you, who have to rule, is that sensuality in all things should be conquered by reason, so that in your

188. Latini *Trésor* 2.62.4, quoting Rom. 2:1, 3.

189. Unidentified.

190. Unidentified.

191. Latini *Trésor* 2.64.2, quoting Ecclus. 19:8.

192. Latini *Trésor* 2.64.2, quoting Seneca.

193. Claudian *Panegyricus, Carmen* 8.261–62 (Hall, 70): “tunc omnia iure tenebis,/cum poteris rex esse tui.”

heart virtue has the upper hand, and not self-will. Since it is more necessary for a prince than for another—though it is appropriate to all—because he has greater authority, and also because his subjects will readily follow his example in good or evil, he should show himself more accomplished than common men: he should strive hard with himself to vanquish all vicious passions. And Tully concurs when he says that it is a royal virtue to curb one's emotions and keep them under control. This relates to the subject of speech, in the matter of what should be said and what should not, which we discussed above: because anger is often what moves the mouth to speak, and it would be wrong for a good prince, since he should have a calm manner that is never shaken, to be seen speaking or acting in angry outbursts of rage, as tyrants commonly are. It is most important that you guard against this, as Ovid says so well: “Conquer your heart and your anger, you who would conquer all things.” To convince yourself that anger is wrong in a prince, you can see it in the very ugly appearances and uncontrolled expressions that Tully records as observable in an angry man. He says that when the heart is inflamed with anger, it makes the face terrible to see and the eyes fierce and flashing; it binds the tongue, upsets the body and makes it tremble; it makes the limbs—feet, hands, and face—move uncontrollably, jerking about oddly; and it prevents a man from recognizing his friends or those behaving well toward him, and from making any use of the faculty of reason. As Seneca says: “When a man is full of anger he sees nothing but rage and wickedness.” Cato himself agrees, saying: “Anger clouds the mind so much that it cannot tell truth from falsehood.” Petrus Alphonsi said on this same subject: “There is a fault in human nature, such that when the mind is disturbed by some upheaval, it loses the perception of the difference between true and false”;<sup>194</sup> and because a man in this state does not know what he is doing, many wrongs are often committed when this happens. Horace says: “The law can see the man who is overtaken by anger, but he does not see the law,”<sup>195</sup> for in carrying out the crime he is committing in anger he does not see what can befall him as a result, whether by divine punishment or otherwise. And therefore Pythagoras said: “Let anger be far from us, for nothing done in anger can be well done or well conceived.”<sup>196</sup>

This anger which we have been speaking about commonly forces the heart to make the mouth speak immoderately, whether in threats or in slandering others; and harm and repentance often result, although sometimes too late. And

194. Latini *Trésor* 2.62.2, quoting Petrus Alphonsi *Contra Judaeos* (pl. 157:539B).

195. Cf. Latini *Trésor* 2.62.2, but here attributed to Seneca.

196. Latini *Trésor* 2.62.2, where it is attributed to Cicero *De officiis* 1.38.136 (Atzert, 47).

for this reason Cato said: “It is most important to curb one’s tongue in anger, and being able to control it is a superhuman virtue.” Solomon says, on this: “He who cannot control the urge to vent his anger in speech is like a city open and surrounded by enemies”: that is to say, all the vices are ready to come in.

There are some people who by their nature are prone to anger, and do not have the sense to restrain themselves; and such people are to be avoided at all costs, since they are very dangerous in their deeds and in their language, and it will destroy them. Saint Augustine said: “It is more praiseworthy to avoid evil by keeping quiet than to conquer it by responding.” And Jesus son of Sirach said: “Do not get into an argument over something that has nothing to do with you.” Also, it does great good to speak to such people gently, as the common proverb says: “Gentle words restrain great anger.” Likewise Panphille: “Friendly and gentle words make and keep friends, break down anger, and attract hearts.”

Therefore, still on the subject of watching one’s tongue in all situations, Solomon says: “He who guards his tongue guards his soul and his body, for it has the power of life and death.”

37

### **What can be said in condemnation of voluptuousness in a prince, and being too given over to pleasures of the flesh**

If you devote yourself to Bacchus and  
Venus, though you subdue all else, you  
have come beneath the yoke. Walter,  
*Alexandreis*.<sup>197</sup>

In order to have covered everything that is most fitting for a prince, so that our work may be complete, with what we have said above in censure of vices and praise of virtues, it seems to me desirable in conclusion of our work to touch on something that may greatly diminish the worth of a great lord, or of any prominent person who becomes taken up with it: pleasures of the body, and all voluptuousness. Since involvement in such pursuits is vain, proscribed, and dishonorable, and corrupts and disrupts all good works in a person who indulges in it. It is a great shame when such a vice is seen in a man who has the high responsibilities of government, as princes do, for since it is their duty to be attentive and take care that the matters of the public realm are well managed in their hands, it is no light load to fulfill

197. Walter of Châtillon *Alexandreis* 1.167–68 (Colker, 15).

properly the duties this involves. Toward ensuring this the author quoted above in Latin advised Alexander, in these words that can be seen to apply to all princes: “You who conquer and rule men, if you devote yourself to wine and lust you enslave yourself,” which is to be understood as concerned with all excesses of bodily comfort, since infinite evils can come of it. I could give you plenty of examples of this from many princes and prominent men who through it lost soul, body, honor, and even their kingdom; but I can pass more quickly over this now, because I have already set them down in a book I entitled *The Body Politic*, which was similarly addressed to you. It will suffice here to give some authoritative statements of wise men on the matter; in particular Aristotle, who said: “Let us take care that pleasure does not rule us, for there is nothing more capable of leading man astray.” And after that he said: “Lust and wine, lechery and wasting time in idleness confuse the senses and lead men into error, and in the end bring them to nothing.”<sup>198</sup> Sallust agrees with this, saying: “a mind given over to sensuality is powerless to devote itself to good.”<sup>199</sup> On this Solomon also said: “Wisdom will not be found in the land of those who live for pleasure.”

38

### **Further on this matter, and praise of the institution of marriage**

Pleasure belongs to a small weak mind.<sup>200</sup>

Further on the subject that it is not proper for a prince, whose spirit should surpass other men in greatness, to be greatly taken up with pleasures of the body, and that this may become grounds for serious criticism, the Latin above says that voluptuousness and sensual enjoyment are signs of weak and feeble spirit. And Vergil says: “If you want to rule, regulate your actions toward great things.”<sup>201</sup> Seneca too, encouraging every wise and powerful man to guard against this weakness, said: “When the will obeys reason, then the noblest part of man is lady and queen of the heart’s realm.” Therefore, one in whom such a power rules is rightly called lord and master of other men because of the noble workings of virtue, which make him shun all baseness. So as Tully says, in view of the great fault and evil it is for such a noble animal

198. Adapting Latini *Trésor* 2.76.3, without Christine’s attribution of these words to Aristotle, followed by the second quotation, attributed by Latini to Scripture (Eclus. 19:2).

199. Latini *Trésor* 2.76.1, quoting Sallust *De coniuratione Catalinae* 51 (Kurfess, 42).

200. Juvenal *Saturae* 13.189 (Willis, 180): “*semper et infirmi est animi exigui que voluptas.*”

201. Cf. Latini *Trésor* 2.82.3, quoting Vergil.

as man, in whom reason should rule—otherwise he is defective and like a brute beast—he must guard against degrading his heart, of which Seneca says that when he is wise it is like the world of the moon where there is always light; and let him not debase his freedom in the slavery of pleasure. Horace wondered at those princes and powerful men, in particular, who readily let themselves be conquered by their carnal appetites, saying what a marvel it is that men who want to rule over everything let themselves be overrun, tamed, and degraded by sensuality. And Macrobius said: “You, man, who have been created in order to pursue intelligent activity, which of its nature requires high things: leave them! Leave carnality and the pleasures of the body and base things, to the dumb beasts that have no other glory, and accustom yourself to the great works that perfect the soul and bring fame.” An infinite number can be found of such and similar authoritative sayings of wise men praising abstinence from carnal pleasure in princes and all noblemen. But let these suffice to instruct you, if it please you, most noble royal scion, how you should behave from your earliest youth, so that such occupations do not hinder and take away from you the practice of virtues and excellence of renown that befit you. For on the danger of becoming accustomed in youth to vicious pursuits, Horace says that a soft shell that is soaked in or moistened with something will retain the odor of the substance in question for a long time.<sup>202</sup> Seneca himself says where there has been a fire the smoke will remain for a long time. And because many young men delight in talking about foolish things, the authorities severely condemn that too. Seneca says: “Refrain from offensive talk, for it encourages foolish actions.” Elsewhere he says: “A wise man is honest in all things.” And Socrates says: “I do not think that what is shameful to do can be honest to say.” To speak truly, it was to avert the problems both in the matter of sin and in appeasing the carnal desire of the flesh in legitimate ways, as well as for the proper reproduction of humankind, that marriages were ordained. This estate and order should be held in great reverence—as it is recited in the treasury of a book—for eleven principal reasons:<sup>203</sup> first, because it was instituted by God; second, because of the dignity of the place where it was instituted, the Earthly Paradise; third, that it is an ancient institution; fourth, that Adam and Eve were clean of all

202. Cf. Horace *Epistulae* 1.2.69 (Shackleton Bailey, 257).

203. Latini *Trésor* 2.77.2. This oblique reference to “a treasury of a book” is Christine’s only explicit reference to Latini’s *Li Livres dou Trésor*, which appears to have been her source for many of the quotations in this part. Although much of the following passage is taken directly from Latini *Trésor* 2.77.2, the mention of St. Archedeclin at Cana recalls a wider medieval tradition.

sin when God placed them together; fifth, because God saved this order from the Flood in Noah's ark; sixth, that Our Lady belonged to this order; seventh, because Our Lord honored the marriage assembly when He Himself was with His mother and His disciples at Saint Archedeclin's wedding; eighth, that there He turned water into wine as a sign of the increase in goods that should come in marriage; ninth, that the children born of marriage are true heirs and without reproach; tenth, because it is one of the seven sacraments of the Holy Church; eleventh, because of the sin that one avoids through marriage, and many other benefits that come from it to those who behave well and as they should—within its bounds.

39

**Here begins a brief consideration of some of the virtues already mentioned, supporting them with authorities, beginning with justice**

Let justice, celebrated by the ancients,  
therefore drive your actions; and  
through you, may final justice, which  
has left the earth for the stars above,  
be recalled from on high. Walter,  
*Alexandreis*.<sup>204</sup>

Most revered prince, even if in the end I were able to tell you all of the matters of virtue that you ought to know, I should be utterly unworthy of the telling. Nevertheless, fair youth, may you be pleased to study and take note, not of worthless words, but of the fair sayings of wise men, recalled here and elsewhere, which teach you and demonstrate all things that are propitious and right for you to practise. Because they are scattered here and there in many books and volumes, I have collected some of them here so they may be seen more easily, with some final comment and brief review of the subjects already covered.

Some of these authorities are good for helping you to commit to memory and recall once more all I have told you of your good grandfather, and other distinguished men. To wit, Aristotle who speaks thus to you: "May your deeds be directed principally by your study of justice, which your predecessors so esteemed, in order that, though it left the earth through bad government in the past, it may by you be called back down from heaven."

204. Walter of Châtillon *Alexandreis* 1.175–77 (Colker, 16).

**How it behoves those who are of noble extraction and lineage to show it in their actions**

For his stock and ancestors which we ourselves have not made, I can scarcely call our own. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*.<sup>205</sup>

But why does the poet speak these words, saying that he finds it difficult to give praise to anyone because of their forebears? What he means is that it is not enough to be descended from good, noble, and valiant people, if one is not like them oneself in goodness and conduct. It is to the latter that glory and praise rightly belongs, for there is more censure due to someone descended from a good, great, and exalted line who degrades himself in vice and base pursuits than to someone who has never had contact with any such dignity. It is important for great men and nobles to remember this, so they can take care that the nobility of their forebears and parents not die away in them. On this Julius Caesar made a very good response to an impertinent man who had reproached him for not being of noble lineage. He replied: "I am better off to have nobility starting with me than you are to have it running out in you," which means that greater praise is due to someone from whatever humble origins who is noble in the way he speaks and acts than to someone of noble lineage who speaks and acts basely.

**The great evil that can come to a prince through the vice of laziness**

O laziness, stepmother of the virtues; although it may be hostile to one of any age, yet it is a most pernicious enemy of youth, which if seduced by its blandishments will be weakened by its destructive power to growing into something worse.<sup>206</sup>

205. P supplies "in Metamorphoseos." Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.140–41: "nam genus et proavos et, quae non fecimus ipsi, / vix ea nostra voco."

206. Boccaccio *Liber de casibus virorum illustrium* 6.5, ed. P. G. Ricci and V. Zaccaria, in *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, ed. V. Branca (Milan: Mondadori, 1983), 9:9: "O noverca virtutum mollicies, esi cuius etati adversa sit, adolescentie quidem perniciosissima hostis est. Nam si fuerit suis blanditiis

Since the demands of incessant business arising in matters of lordly leadership call for great diligence in a prince, and so that laziness can never cheat you of the glory which is due to you—more on account of your virtues than your leadership, however magnificent your authority now and to come may be—if you will nevertheless apply yourself to worthy pursuits, you will find there the height of happiness. And so that you do not fail in this, listen, if it please you, and take note of the vituperation that Boccaccio, quoted above, heaps on this vice. “O laziness!” he says, “stepmother of virtue: those who are drawn by your blandishments continually fall into worse and worse states.” Thus you can see that the consequence of this laziness is the corruption of all glory, and therefore any man who wants to aim high should flee it with all his might.

42

### How the prince should readily communicate with those around him

Nature loves nothing solitary.<sup>207</sup>

Communication is part of what is good.  
Maxims of the philosophers.

The cause of this vice of laziness, which we have said above is so unbecoming to a prince, is often that he is alone too much. Because this does not fit well with a man who has to busy himself with many things, Tully himself, quoted above, says that nature does not like that which is solitary, which means that it is contrary to human nature to keep oneself shut away too much. Therefore Aristotle said: “A solitary man is either better than a man or worse than a beast.”<sup>208</sup> And it was he who said, in the second Latin quotation above: “Human communication is of the nature of every good.”

43

### How the prince should not favor flatterers

Guide of nobles, despise double-speaking servants.<sup>209</sup>

---

*attracta et eius resederit inclinata in gremio, non ipsa periclitatur tantum, verum de reliquo vite actum est; que, si etiam protrahatur longissima, confecta huius exitiale tabe, semper in peius exrescendo labitur.*”

207. Cicero *De amicitia* 88 (Simbeck, 79): “*sic natura solitarium nihil amat.*”

208. “Mais celui qui ne peut communiquer civilement. . . . Et pour ce convient it que tel homme soit ou beste ou dieu.” Oresme *Politiques* 1.2 (Menut, 49).

209. Walter of Châtillon *Alexandreis* 1.85 (Colker, 11).



But although communication with men is good, that does not mean it is good to communicate with the wicked, for the company of such people is neither good nor pleasant, as has been said many times already. Because it happens from time to time that there are such people in the entourage of princes, and because they look more to their own benefit than to the good and honor of their lords, Aristotle said: “You, prince, who must ask counsel, it should be of wise men, and you should despise and banish all flattering and double-tongued servants.”

44

### **How there should be a settled order in the actions and way of living of the prince**

What abandons fixed order for a  
quick path does not have a happy end.  
Boethius.<sup>210</sup>

Boethius says that when people do not keep a settled order in their actions, the end and the outcome of whatever they do is not good. These words, like the others, apply most particularly to great lords, who should maintain order, both in their way of living and in their general actions. That is to say, they should divide up the day and night into portions in such a way that, at each hour, what the time requires is always done, rather than making day into night and night into day, and behaving in other unregulated ways that are not befitting to a prince.

45

### **Concerning the charity that pertains to a prince**

Have charity, which is the bond of  
perfection. Paul to the Colossians.<sup>211</sup>

But the purpose of the precept is  
charity from a pure heart and a good  
conscience and faith that is not false.  
Paul, I Timothy.<sup>212</sup>

210. Boethius *Philosophiae consolatio* 1.m.6.20 (Bieler, 14).

211. Col. 3:14: “super omnia autem haec caritatem quod est vinculum perfectionis.”

212. I Tim. 1:5.

Judgment without mercy shall be reserved for the one denies a coin to one who begs. Guido, Introduction to his *Summa*.<sup>213</sup>

Among the other virtues, good prince, I would remind you of charity, in accord with the teaching of Saint Paul, above in Latin, who says to mankind: “Have charity, for it is that which is the binding of perfection.” This means it is what culminates and joins together all virtues, as he says in the next quotation. “The end,” he says, “of the commandment is charity from a clean and pure heart, and good conscience, and not faith that is feigned.” Ah! what great weight these words of gold carry, for in them lies the pattern for all our life and works, which is something not to be forgotten. So it is singularly proper for a prince to be merciful, and it is bad for those who are not. And Guido, in the next quotation above, said to them: “Certainly judgment without mercy will be made on anyone who denies or refuses mercy to those who ask it.”

46

### Some teachings of Aristotle

Let piety, shame, and reverence for what is right not be lacking, to celebrate the divine summits, tame yourself when asked, labor over the laws, censure the guilty with civility. Put off vengeance, until anger has passed. Walter, *Alexandreis*.<sup>214</sup>

There is nothing so firm under the arc of Phoebus that there cannot be fear of destruction by the weak. Who as he sails the world should not fear the meeting and storm of death. From teachings of Aristotle.<sup>215</sup>

213. Unidentified in Guido, *Exordia*.

214. Walter of Châtillon *Alexandreis* 1.178–81 (Colker, 16).

215. Walter of Châtillon *Alexandreis* 8.400–403 (Colker, 217).

Therefore good prince, to speak briefly, so that prolixity does not render my writings tedious to read or listen to, may it please you above all to remember the fair words of Aristotle quoted above, which contain a full measure of good and useful things that he said to his disciple Alexander, who later ruled the whole world. “Have pity,” he says: “Keep your eyes fixed on right and reason. Inquire into the sciences. Soften your anger with prayers, punish the guilty with rightful justice, defer your vengeance until your anger has passed.” It is as if he then wanted to say: “For there is nothing under the threshold or pivot of the sun so firmly fixed that one need not fear ruin; who then, that swims and swirls among the perils of the world, should not fear the meeting with death, or its pain?”

47

### **In conclusion, concerning the maintenance of friendship**

Agreement is one good true thing; by the same token discord is a bad thing, quite different from what is lofty.  
Pythagoras.<sup>216</sup>

Feigned love makes a man untrustworthy and makes him hateful to the wise. Guido in the Introduction to his *Summa*.<sup>217</sup>

To wish for the same thing, and not to want the same thing, is indeed strong friendship. Sallust, *De coniuratione Catalinae* 1.<sup>218</sup>

In human affairs nothing is found that is sweeter than friendship, nothing more holy is sought after, nothing more fruitful is preserved; for it has the fruit of the life is which now and is to come. Cassiodorus, *De amicitia*.<sup>219</sup>

216. Unidentified.

217. Unidentified in Guido, *Exordia*.

218. Sallust *De coniuratione Catalinae* 20.3 (Kurfess, 17).

219. Not Cassiodorus, but Peter of Blois *De amicitia Christiana* 3 (Davy, 116).

These things said, let us move on to the end and conclusion toward which this book was undertaken: the subject and substance of peace, especially civil peace, and avoiding discord. May it please you also, most worthy prince, to maintain among your people—in the way suggested in the words of the philosopher Pythagoras—unity, goodness, and concord, which are beneficial things that are always of one accord and party, and put behind you all division, wrong, and discord, which are all in conflict one with another.<sup>220</sup> Let there be no false and worthless love in or around you, which, wherever it is, in the end dishonors the man who practises it and makes him despised by or hateful to wise men, so that you discover how much such falsity causes one to be utterly hated, as Guido says above. Let there rather be between you, those of your blood, and your good friends, such perfect love that, as Sallust says above, you want the same things and are opposed to the same things, in the end. Since this is steadfast love, it will always keep you in true friendship and concord; and united, so that everyone of you wants what the other wishes. Similarly for the avoidance of evils, for as it is said above, there is nothing sweeter to be found in human affairs than friendship, nothing asked for that is more sound, nothing kept that is more fruitful; and certainly, Sallust says, in friendship there is the fruit of the present life and of that to come.

48

### **The last chapter and the end of the book**

An affair is always determined in its end.  
Proverbs, Chapter 7.<sup>221</sup>

Now it is time to bring my work to a close, of which one can say, following the proverb above, that the good and the bad of something can always be seen in the end according to its effect. Therefore, most noble and excellent prince, if it pleases you with your benign grace to take note of the intention toward you and your noble family expressed throughout by your humble servant in compiling this book, if it is your pleasure to deign to read it, or have it read, or hear it, you will find her to have been moved by such affection through the desire to increase the prosperity of your soul, body,

220. Maud Temple, “Paraphrasing in the *Livre de paix*,” 185, suggests that here Christine is remembering more than one passage of Cicero’s *De natura deorum*.

221. Unidentified in Proverbs.

and reputation, that you will kindly make allowance for and amend the faults that are there through ignorance, so that the laurel that is gained in victory and is thus due to the victor for honorable efforts will not be withheld from the labor of this work, which I hope your worthy highness may find agreeable and remember, with God's help. May He perfect every grace in you. Amen.

Here ends the book of peace.

