

## Dedicatory Letter

Niccolo Machiavelli to  
the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici

In most instances it is customary for those who desire to win the favour of a prince to present themselves to him along with those things which they value most or which they feel will most please him. Thus, we often see princes given horses, arms, and vestments of gold cloth, precious stones, and similar ornaments suited to their greatness. Wishing, therefore, to offer myself to Your Magnificence with some evidence of my devotion to you, I have not found among my belongings anything that I might value more or prize so much as the knowledge and deeds of great men that I have learned from a long experience in modern affairs and a continuous study of antiquity. Having with great care and for a long time thought about and examined these deeds, and having now set them down in a little book, I am sending them to Your Magnificence. And although I consider this work unworthy of your station, nevertheless I am sure that your humanity will move you to accept it, for there could be no greater gift from me than to give you the means to be able, in a very short time, to understand all that in so many years and with so many hardships and dangers I have come to understand and to appreciate. I have neither decorated nor filled this work with elaborate sentences, with rich and magnificent words, or with any other form of rhetorical or unnecessary ornamentation that many writers normally use in describing and enriching their subject-matter, for I wished that nothing should set my work apart or make it pleasing except the variety of its material and the gravity of its contents.