



Discourses on Livy (Palmera Publishing)

Niccolo Machiavelli

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"Discourses on Livy" is a work of political history and philosophy written in the early 16th century by the Italian writer and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli, best known as the author of *The Prince*. The Discourses were published posthumously with papal privilege in 1531. The title identifies the work's subject as the first ten books of Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, which relate the expansion of Rome through the end of the Third Samnite War in 293 BCE, although Machiavelli discusses what can be learned from many other eras including contemporary politics. Machiavelli saw history in general as a way to learn useful lessons from the past for the present, and also as a type of analysis which could be built upon, as long as each generation did not forget the works of the past. Machiavelli frequently describes Romans and other ancient peoples as superior models for his contemporaries, but he also describes political greatness as something which comes and goes amongst peoples, in cycles. Discourses on Livy comprises a dedication letter and three books with 142 numbered chapters. The first two books (but not the third) are introduced by unnumbered prefaces. A good deal has been made of the coincidence that Livy's history also contained 142 books in addition to its introduction and other numerological curiosities that turn up in Machiavelli's writings. Machiavelli says that the first book will discuss things that happened inside of Rome as the result of public counsel, the second, decisions made by the Roman people pertaining to the increase of its empire, and the third, how the actions of particular men made Rome great. This Palmera Publishing edition is the original translation of the work by Henry Neville.

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