

The Art of War

By Niccolò Machiavelli

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OF
WAR

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

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The Art of War (Italian: Dell'arte della guerra) is a treatise by the Italian Renaissance political philosopher and historian Niccolò Machiavelli. The format of The Art of War is a socratic dialogue. The purpose, declared by Lord Fabrizio Colonna (perhaps Machiavelli's persona) at the outset, "To honor and reward virtù, not to have contempt for poverty, to esteem the modes and orders of military discipline, to constrain citizens to love one another, to live without factions, to esteem less the private than the public good." To these ends, Machiavelli notes in his preface, the military is like the roof of a palazzo protecting the contents. Written between 1519 and 1520 and published the following year, it was Machiavelli's only historical or political work printed during his lifetime, though he was appointed official historian of Florence in 1520 and entrusted with minor civil duties.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Born on May 3, 1469, in Florence, Italy, Niccolò Machiavelli was a diplomat for 14 years in Italy's Florentine Republic during the Medici family's exile. When the Medici family returned to power in 1512, Machiavelli was dismissed and briefly jailed. He then wrote *The Prince*, a handbook for politicians on the use of ruthless, self-serving cunning, inspiring the term "Machiavellian" and establishing Machiavelli as the "father of modern political theory." He also wrote several poems and plays. He died on June 21, 1527, in Florence, Italy.

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