

primarysourcedocument

## **The Reason of State (Botero)**

### **The Reason of State (Botero)**

---

*The Reason of State*, Book 1

By Giovanni Botero

1589

[Botero, Giovanni. Book I, Chapter 1 in *The Reason of State*. Translated by P. J. and D. P. Waley; with an introduction by D. P. Waley. London: Routledge and K. Paul. 1956. 3–15.]

---

#### 1. *Reason of State defined*

STATE is a stable rule over a people and Reason of State is the knowledge of the means by which such a dominion may be founded, preserved and extended. Yet, although in the widest sense the term includes all these, it is concerned most nearly with preservation, and more nearly with extension than with foundation; for Reason of State assumes a ruler and a State (the one as artificer, the other as his material) whereas they are not assumed—indeed they are preceded—by foundation entirely and in part by extension. But the art of foundation and of extension is the same because the beginnings and the continuations are of the same nature. And although all that is done to these purposes is said to be done for Reasons of State, yet this is said rather of such actions as cannot be considered in the light of ordinary reason.

#### 2. *The classification of dominion*

There are many kinds of dominion: old, new, poor, rich, or distinguished by other qualities of this sort; but coming closer to our purpose, let us say that some dominion is powerful and some is not, some is natural, some is acquired. By natural we mean dominion where those who rule do so by the will of their subjects, either explicitly, as by the election of kings, or implicitly, as by legitimate succession; and the succession may be either apparent or doubtful. By acquired we mean dominion which has been bought by money or its equivalent, or won by arms; and it may be won by arms either by main force or by treaty, and the treaty may be made either at the discretion of the victor or by negotiation. And the greater the resistance offered to the acquisition the worse will be the quality of the dominion. Furthermore, some dominions are small, others are large, others of a middle size, not absolutely but comparatively, and with respect to their neighbours. Thus a small dominion is one that cannot stand by itself, but needs the protection and support of others; such are the republics of Ragusa and Lucca. A middle-sized dominion has sufficient strength and authority to stand on its own without the need of help from others; such is the signory of Venice and the kingdom of Bohemia, the duchy of Milan and the county of Flanders. Those dominions are large which have a distinct superiority over their neighbours, such as the empires of the Turk and of the Catholic King. Again, some dominions are compact, others

dispersed: the parts of a compact dominion are contiguous, whereas the members of a dispersed dominion do not form a continuous whole. Such was formerly the empire of the Genoese when they were masters of Famagusta and the Ptolomaid, Faglie Vecchie, Pera and Caffa, and such is now that of the Portuguese, with their possessions in Ethiopia, Arabia, India and Brazil, and that of the Catholic King.

### 3. *Of subjects*

Subjects, without which there can be no dominion, are by nature constant or fickle, amenable or proud, given to commerce or to arms, of our holy faith or of some sect; and if sectaries, they may be either infidels, or Jews, or schismatics, or heretics; if heretics, they may be Lutherans, Calvinists, or followers of some similar impiety, and the more contrary they are to truth, and the more distant from it, the worse they are to be held. Again, either they are all subjects in the same degree, with the same cause and form of subjection, or they differ in this, as the Aragonese and Castilians do in Spain, the Burgundians and Bretons in France.

### 4. *The causes of the downfall of states*

The works of nature fail through two kinds of cause, intrinsic and extrinsic. We call intrinsic causes excess and corruption of the essential qualities, extrinsic causes fire, the sword, and other forms of violence. In the same way States come to ruin through internal or external causes: the incapacity of the ruler is an internal cause, either by his extreme youth or his ineptitude or his stupidity, or loss of his reputation, which may come about in many ways. Cruelty towards subjects, and licentiousness, which dishonours all men and in particular the noble and generous, also bring ruin upon the State; for licentiousness drove the kings and the decemvirs from Rome, introduced the Moors into Spain and lost Sicily for the French. Dionysius the Elder, when he heard that his son had consorted with the wife of an honoured citizen, rebuked him severely, asking him whether he had ever known his father to behave in such a way. The young man answered: 'If you did not, it was because you were not the son of a king'. 'And you will not be the father of a king', he replied, 'if you do not mend your ways'.

It is a common subject of debate why more states are ruined through the licentiousness of their rulers than through their cruelty. But it is not really hard to account for this since cruelty arouses fear as well as hatred of him who uses it. Licentiousness begets hatred together with contempt, so that whereas cruelty is opposed by hatred but supported by fear (although weakly, for this lasts but a short time), licentiousness has no support because both hatred and contempt work against it; and furthermore cruelty takes life or power from him who is offended, which licentiousness does not.

Other internal causes of the ruin of states are envy, rivalry, discord, ambition among the great, fickleness, inconstancy and passion in the people, and the inclination of both to favour a different rule. Ambitious and foolish princes often bring ruin upon their States by dispersing their strength in an attempt to undertake what is beyond their means, as we see in the enterprises of the Athenians and the Spartans, and still more in those of Demetrius King of Macedon and Pyrrhus King of Epirus. The stratagems and power of enemies are external causes: thus the Romans ruined the Macedonians, and the barbarians the greatness of Rome. But which are the most pernicious causes? Without doubt, internal causes; for it rarely happens that external causes bring about the downfall of a state which has not already been corrupted by internal ones. From these two kinds of simple cause a third arises, which may be called mixed, when the subjects come to agreement with the enemy and betray to them their country or their prince.

### 5. *Whether it is a greater task to extend or to preserve a state*

Clearly it is a greater task to preserve a state, because human affairs wax and wane as if by a law of nature, like the moon to which they are subject. Thus to keep them stable when they have become great and to maintain them so that they do not decline and fall is an almost superhuman undertaking. Circumstances, the weakness of the enemy and the deeds of others all play a considerable part in conquest, but only most excellent qualities can hold what has been conquered. Might conquers, but wisdom preserves: many are mighty, but few are wise. *In turbas et discordias pessimo cuique maxima vis; pax et quies bonis artibus indigent.*<sup>[1]</sup> Moreover he who conquers and enlarges his dominions has only to labour against the external causes of ruin, but he who strives to maintain what he already holds has to contend with both external and internal causes. Territory is acquired a little at a time, but it must all be preserved together as a whole; for this reason Heracles, when he wishes to persuade the Romans not to extend their empire beyond Europe, reminds them *parari singula acquirendo facilius potuisse, quam universa teneri posse.*<sup>[2]</sup> The Spartans showed that it was of more importance to preserve one's own property than to acquire that of others, by punishing those who lost in battle not their sword but their shield; and among the Germans *scutum reliquisse praecepit flagitium, nec aut sacris adesse, aut concilium inire ignominioso fas;*<sup>[3]</sup> and the Romans called Fabius Maximus the shield and Marcellus the sword of the republic, and they certainly rated Fabius above Marcellus. Aristotle was also of this opinion, for he says in his Politics that the principal task of the legislator is not to form and establish a city but to make provision for its long continuance;<sup>[4]</sup> and when the wife of Theopompus King of Sparta accused him of having weakened his authority by associating the senate or council of ephors with him in the exercise of supreme power, he answered that the more stable and strong his authority, the greater it would be.

But how does it happen, we may ask, that those who conquer are more honoured than those who preserve? It is because the results of conquest are more obvious and more popular, they cause more stir and noise, they make an outward show and have the virtue of novelty, which man so desires and enjoys. Military enterprises offer more wonders and delights than the arts of preservation and peace, but the greater the wisdom and power of judgment of the ruler the less novelty and tumult there is in a peaceful state. As many more people will stop to gaze at a tumbling torrent than at a calm river, although rivers are a more noble sight than torrents, so he who acquires is more admired than he who maintains; and yet, as Florus says, *difficilius est provincias obtinere quam facere: viribus parantur, iure retinentur.*<sup>[5]</sup> And Livy says: *excellentibus ingeniis citius defuerit ars qua civem regant, quam qua hostem superent.*<sup>[6]</sup>

### 6. *Whether large, small or middle-sized empires are more lasting*

Certainly those of the middle size are more easily held, for the weakness of small empires exposes them to the might and abuse of great ones which devour them and profit by their ruin, like large fish feeding upon smaller ones, and birds of prey upon smaller birds. Thus Rome grew great through the suppression of the surrounding cities, and Philip of Macedon through the oppression of the Greek republics. Large States are envied and feared by their neighbours, who often league together and united accomplish what one alone cannot do. But they are also more susceptible to the internal causes of ruin because riches increase with greatness and vices with riches, particularly luxury, arrogance, license and avarice, the root of all evil. States which have reached their peak through frugality have degenerated through opulence. Furthermore, greatness leads to confidence in one's own powers, and confidence to negligence, idleness and contempt both of subjects and enemies, so that States may retain their position through their past reputation rather than their present resources or qualities. And just as alchemy produces what seems gold to the eye but is proved false by a touchstone, so such States have great fame but little strength, like trees which are high and widespread yet within are hollow and rotten, or men who are great in body but weak in stamina: and this a time of trial will discover. So long as Sparta was contained within the boundaries prescribed by Lycurgus she grew in valour and in reputation above all the cities of Greece; but when she had extended her rule and subjugated the Greek cities and the kingdoms of Asia, she declined, so that whereas before Agesilaus's time the city had never seen the

smoke, still less the weapons of an enemy, after the Athenians had been defeated and Asia laid waste she saw her citizens flee before the Thebans, an ignoble and despised race. The Romans also, after overcoming the Carthaginians, stood in awe of the Numantines for fourteen years. They had conquered many kingdoms and added many new provinces to their empire, but they were cut to pieces by Viriathus in Spain, by the banished Sertorius in Lusitania and by Spartacus in Italy; they were besieged on all sides and famished by pirates. Valour thrusts a way to greatness through the midst of difficulties, but when this is achieved it is immediately stifled by riches, enervated by pleasure and degraded by sensuality; it weathers severe storms and threatening tempests on the high seas, but shipwrecks and is lost in harbour. Then noble thoughts and high purposes and honourable enterprises fall away and their place is taken by pride, arrogance, avarice among those in office, and insolence among the populace. Clowns find more favour than captains, chatterers than soldiers, adulation than truth; wealth is held in honour above virtue, gifts above justice; simplicity gives way to deceit, goodness to malice, so that as the State grows the foundations of its strength are sapped. Iron generates the rust which corrodes it, ripe fruits bring forth the worms which rot them, and great States give birth to the vices which gradually, or sometimes at one stroke, overthrow them. Enough has been said of great States.

Middle-sized States are the most lasting, since they are exposed neither to violence by their weakness nor to envy by their greatness, and their wealth and power being moderate, passions are less violent, ambition finds less support and licence less provocation than in large States. Fear of their neighbours restrains them, and even if feelings are roused to anger they are more easily quieted and tranquillity restored. Rome is an instance of this, for before she became powerful such rebellions as there were lasted only a short time, ended at the least sign of a foreign war, and never led to the spilling of blood: but when the greatness of her empire had given an opportunity to ambition and faction had aggravated it, when her enemies had been vanquished, and Marius had won a following and a reputation (with the means to maintain it) by the wars and spoils of Numidia and the Cimbrians, Sulla by those of Greece and Mithridates, Pompey by those of Spain and Asia, and Caesar by those of Gaul, then revolts were no longer fought out with stools and chairs, but with fire and the sword, and the wars and rivalries ended only with the destruction of the opposing parties and of the empire itself. Thus some middle-sized powers have lasted far longer than the greatest, as we see in the case of Sparta, Carthage and above all Venice, for there has never been an empire in which mediocrity of power went with such stability and strength. Yet although this mediocrity is more conducive to the preservation of an empire than excessive power, middle-sized States do not last long if their leaders are not content but wish to expand and become great, and, exceeding the bounds of mediocrity, leave behind also those of security. The Venetians undertook in the support of Pisa and in the league against Ludovico Sforza more than a mediocre power could hope to accomplish, incurring heavy expense and no gain in the one enterprise and imminent danger of disaster in the other. So long as the ruler recognises the limits of mediocrity and is content to remain within them his rule will be lasting.

### 7. *Whether compact or dispersed states are more lasting*

A dispersed State is either split up in such a way that the various parts are unable to give aid to each other because strong powers which are openly or potentially hostile stand between them, or else mutual aid is possible, in one of three ways: either with money (but this is the most difficult), or by agreement with the States through which help must pass, or when all the parts of an empire have on the sea and have naval forces to defend them. Again, the parts of a scattered empire are either so weak that they cannot stand alone or defend themselves against their neighbours or so great and powerful that they dominate their neighbours or are at least their equals. Now we should say that without doubt a great empire is more safe from enemy attacks and invasions because it is powerful and united, and unity confers strength and firmness; yet on the other hand it is more vulnerable to the internal causes of ruin, for greatness leads to self-confidence, confidence to negligence and negligence to contempt and loss of prestige and authority. Power breeds wealth, which is the parent of pleasure as pleasure is of all the vices; and this is why empires fall away from the height of their prosperity, for valour diminishes with increase of power and virtue with accretion of wealth. The Roman Empire was at its height under Caesar

Augustus; pleasures and dissipation began to win ascendancy over virtue in the reign of Tiberius and gained more ground under Caligula and his successors. The valour of Vespasian improved the moral state of the empire, but the vices of Domitian made it worse again; the goodness of Trajan and a few of his successors restored it, but after that it toppled and collapsed, till the empire came to ruin, and when there was an occasional temporary recovery this was the work of foreign-born emperors and generals, not of the Romans themselves. These emperors were Trajan the Spaniard, Antoninus Pius the Frenchman, Septimius Severus the African, Alexander Mamea,<sup>[7]</sup> Claudius the Dardanian, Aurehan of Moesia, Probus of Sirmio, Diocletian of Dalmatia, Galerian of Dacia, Constans (father of the great Constantine) of Dardania, Theodosius, another Spaniard, who may be called the restorer of the empire: and of the generals who showed valour, Stilicho, Uldin, and Aetius were Vandals, Castinus a Scythian, Boniface a Thracian, Ricimer, who defeated Beorgor King of the Alans, a Goth. From this we may see that Roman virtue was so enervated and corrupted by pleasure that without foreign aid Rome could not stand. And because the barbarians served for interested motives and for their own particular ends, which were often wicked and treacherous, in the end her ruin was complete; for an empire that has no valour within it cannot resist for long the intrigues and attacks of its rivals and enemies. Spain, corrupt in every part, fell to the power of the Moors in thirty months, and the Byzantine Empire succumbed to the Turks after a few years. Moreover the effect of baronial rivalry or popular revolt or licence among both these elements within a compact State spreads rapidly to the unaffected parts, like the plague, or some other evil contagion, through their very proximity; and if the ruler is worthless and given to foolishness a compact empire will become diseased and demoralised more easily than a scattered one and will consequently be weaker in the face of its foes.

On the other hand a scattered empire is weaker than a compact one because the distance between the parts is always a source of weakness and if the different parts are so weak that none of them is able to stand alone against the attacks of a neighbouring power, or if they are so placed that one cannot come to the aid of another, then the empire will not last long. But if they are able to help each other and if each is large and vigorous so that it need not fear invasion, the empire may be accounted as strong as a compact one, first because the parts being in a position to offer each other mutual aid it is not really scattered, and though by its nature it is weaker than a compact empire, it has many advantages. In the first place it cannot all be assailed at the same time, and the greater the distance between the parts the more certain this is, for the task is too great for one power alone and it is not easy for many to league together; so that when one part is attacked, those which are not can come to its aid, just as Portugal has often assisted her possessions in the Indies. Also baronial rivalry and popular revolt will not spread throughout the whole empire when it is a scattered one because each part will have its own factions, families, friendships, loyalties and retinues, and the ruler may use the areas which have remained faithful to punish those which are disaffected. In the same way other troubles will spread less rapidly and violently because distance places an obstacle in the way of these disorders and brings in the factor of time, which is always on the side of justice and legitimacy. It is rarely that external causes bring about the downfall of an empire that has not already been corrupted within: as Vegetius writes *nulla enim quamvis minima natio potest ah adversariis perdeleri nisi propriis simultatibus se ipsa consumpserit*.<sup>[8]</sup>

Given the two above conditions we hold that a scattered empire is as secure and lasting as a compact one. The Spanish Empire is an instance of this, because the states of which it is composed, such as Milan and Flanders (so often threatened in vain by the French), Naples and Sicily, are so powerful that they are not alarmed at the sound of warlike preparation close at hand. And although they are a considerable distance apart, they are not entirely separated because, apart from the power of that empire's extreme wealth, they are all joined by the sea. No State is so distant that it cannot be aided by naval forces, and the Catalans, Basques and Portuguese are such skilful sailors that they may be truly called masters of the art of navigation. The empire, which otherwise might appear scattered and unwieldy, must be accounted united and compact with its naval forces in the hands of such men, particularly now that Portugal and Castile are united.<sup>[9]</sup> The Portuguese possessions, spreading eastwards, meet those of Castile in the Philippine Islands, and in this great voyage they have islands, kingdoms and harbours everywhere at their command, some their own, others belonging to friendly rulers, subject powers or their allies.

### 8. *The means whereby a State may be preserved*

The preservation of a State depends upon the peace and tranquility of its subjects. This peace may be divided into two kinds and so may its converse, war: war may be waged by a foreign power or by the subjects themselves; and within this latter kind of war another division may be made between civil war, in which the subjects fight each other, and rebellion or revolt, in which they fight their ruler. All these disagreeable possibilities may be avoided by the exercise of the arts which win for a ruler the love and admiration of his people; for just as the works of nature are preserved by the forces which have given them birth, the means which brought a State into being are those which should preserve it. There is no doubt that in the earliest times men were moved to create kings and to place themselves under the rule and leadership of others by the affection they felt for them and high regard (which we call admiration) for their valour, and we may deduce that these are the feelings which keep subjects obedient and peaceful. But which had more influence in the choice of a king, affection or admiration? Without doubt, admiration; for people are led to bestow government upon others not to give them pleasure and favour but for the common good, and they choose not the most charming and amiable but those who are known for their valour and outstanding qualities. Thus in times of danger the Romans entrusted power not to popular and delightful young men but to mature and experienced citizens: the Manlii, the Papirii, the Fabii, the Decii, the Camilli, the Pauli, the Scipios, the Marii. Camillus, once hated and on that account banished, was recalled in time of need and made dictator. M. Livius, who had been despised and condemned by the people and in consequence of this shame and dishonour had long been out of the public eye, was recalled in the hour of necessity as consul and general against Hannibal's brother, in preference to many others who had been striving with all the arts of ambition to win the love and favour of the people. Public regard summoned L. Paulus to lead the Macedonian campaign, Marius the Cimbric and Pompey the expedition against Mithridates: it made Vespasian, Trajan and Theodosius emperors of Rome, Pepin and Hugh Capet Kings of the Franks and Godfrey and others Kings of Jerusalem.

Wherein lies the difference between affection and admiration? Both are inspired by excellent qualities, but admiration demands supreme excellence whereas affection may be satisfied with a lesser degree of excellence. When a man's goodness and perfection so exceed the average that he is outstanding for them, however much he may be loved for his goodness this is almost insignificant beside his excellence, and such a man is rather admired than loved. If this esteem is founded upon piety and religious feeling it is called reverence, if upon political and military ability it is called admiration; and those qualities in a prince's governance which are likely to make him loved are also of a kind to win him admiration when he shows himself to possess them to an almost divine degree. What inspires love more than justice does? The justice of Camillus in sending away the schoolmaster who had brought his scholars before him won so much admiration that the doors of the Falisci, which force of arms had failed to open, were unlocked by this act. In the same way when Fabricius sent back the treacherous physician to Pyrrhus, the king was so filled with wonder and surprise that he abandoned all thought of making war and resolved instead to negotiate a treaty. What quality is more worthy of affection than rectitude? Scipio's action in returning the beautiful young bride unharmed to her husband won him even more admiration than love, and so increased the universal esteem in which he was held that the Spaniards considered him almost as a god descended upon earth.

### 9. *The need for excellence in a ruler*

The foundation upon which every State is built is the obedience of the subjects to their prince, and this in turn is founded upon his outstanding excellence; for, as the elements and the bodies formed from them obey unresistingly the movements of the heavenly spheres because of their exalted nature and in the heavens themselves the lesser bodies are ruled by the motion of the greater, so a people submits willingly to a ruler adorned by splendid talents, for no one would deny obedience and submission to his

superior, as he would to his inferior or equal. But it is most necessary that the superiority of the ruler should not be in trifling matters and things of little or no importance, but in those which ennoble the soul and mind, which confer an almost celestial and divine greatness and truly exalt a man above his fellows. Livy says *vinculum fidei est melioribus parere*<sup>[10]</sup> and Dionysius *aeterna naturae lege receptum est, ut inferiores praestantioribus pareant*<sup>[11]</sup> Avitus replied gravely to the Ansibari *patendum meliorum imperia*<sup>[12]</sup> and Aristotle holds that those who are pre-eminent in wisdom and judgment are natural rulers, saying that nobles are to be honoured because nobility is a matter of blood and descent, and good parents are likely to have good offspring and better ones better offspring.<sup>[13]</sup> For this reason tyrants fear good men more than bad ones and stout-hearted men more than spiritless ones, for those who are incapable and unworthy of the rank due to excellence have reason to fear those who are capable and worthy of it.

### 10. The two kinds of excellence which a ruler may possess

Excellence may be either absolute or partial: it is absolute when a ruler possesses all or many qualities to a high degree, and it is partial when he is pre-eminent in some quality particularly appropriate to one who rules others. In the first category we would place, among the emperors, Constantine the Great, Constans, Gratian, Theodosius I and II, Justin, Justinian (if he had not been a Monothelite), Tiberius II, Leo the Philosopher, Henry I, Otto I (if he had not importunately arrogated to himself the authority to confer benefices), Otto III, Lothair II, Sigismund, Frederick III; among the Frankish kings Clovis, Childebert, Clothair, Charles Martel (though he did not enjoy the title of king), Pepin, Charlemagne, Charles the Wise, Robert, and Louis VII; the most glorious of Spanish kings have been Recared (who was the first Catholic King of the Goths), Pelagius, Alfonso the Catholic (so called because he stamped out Arianism in Spain), Alfonso the Chaste, Ramiro, Alfonso the Great, Alfonso VII, Sancho (who was almost a second Titus, for both lived and reigned a short time only, and one was called in Spain 'el Deseado',<sup>[14]</sup> the other 'the world's beloved'), Alfonso VII, James King of Aragon, Ferdinand III, and Ferdinand the Catholic; and outstanding among the supreme pontiffs since St. Sylvester have been Julius I, Damasus, Innocent I, Leo the Great, Pelagius, Gregory I, and after him Boniface IV, Vitalian, Adeodatus, Leo II, Cono (known as the Angelic from the sanctity of his life), Constantine, Gregory II and III, Zacharias I, Stephen II, Adrian I, Leo III, Paschal I, Eugenius II (called 'the Father of the Poor'), Leo IV, Benedict III (created Pope against his will), Nicholas I (created Pope in absentia, also against his will), Adrian II, John IV, Leo IX (who was first chosen as Pope by the Emperor Henry, but entered Rome as a private person and was there canonically elected by the people), Nicholas II, Alexander II (elected in absentia), Gregory VIII<sup>[15]</sup> (who restored the liberty of the Church and the authority of the Apostolic See, which had been oppressed by the Emperors), Urban II (the originator of the heroic expedition against the infidel), Paschal II (elected against his will), Gelasius II, Calixtus II, Anastasius IV, Alexander III (steadfast against the Emperor Frederick and the schismatics), Clement III, Clement IV (who refused to allow one of his nephews to hold more than one prebend), Nicholas III (called 'the moderate' on account of his integrity and temperate habits), and Nicholas V (elected against his will).

---

<sup>[1]</sup> Tacitus, *Histories* IV, I: 'in times of turbulence and discord the worst acquire most power, but in peaceful and calm times good qualities are needed'.

<sup>[2]</sup> Livy, XXXVII, 35: 'that it had been easier for them to acquire their provinces one by one than to maintain their entire possessions'.

<sup>[3]</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, VI: 'to have abandoned the shield was the greatest disgrace, and the guilty were debarred from participation in religious rites and the assembly'.

## The Reason of State (Botero)

Published on Natural Law, Natural Rights, and American Constitutionalism (<http://www.nlnrac.org>)

---

[4] Aristotle, *Politics*, II (1274).

[5] Florus, *Epitomae*, II, 30, 29 (also I, 33, 7): 'it is more difficult to keep provinces than to acquire them: they are won by force, they are retained by laws'.

[6] Livy, II, 43, 10: 'men of great ability are more often deficient in the art of governing citizens than in that of overcoming the enemy'.

[7] This must be an allusion to Alexander Severus (208-235), a Syrian by birth, emperor from 222. He was dominated by his mother Julia Avita Mamaea, whose name may be the cause of Botero's slip, although he must have been familiar with the life of that emperor by Lampridius, for he frequently quotes it, and he refers to Mamaea herself at the end of Book VIII, chapter 4. The reference cannot possibly be to Alexander Domitian, a Phrygian, who was proclaimed emperor by the African legions and was killed by Maxentius in 308.

[8] Vegetius, *De re militari*, III, 10: 'no nation, however small, will be overcome by its enemies if it has not already been weakened by internal discord'.

[9] In 1580 Philip II of Spain, profiting by the dynastic crisis which followed the death of Henry II, had annexed the kingdom of Portugal and its wealthy colonies almost without striking a blow.

[10] We have been unable to trace this quotation: 'the bond of loyalty lies in obedience to one's betters'.

[11] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquit Rom.*, I, 5: 'it is an eternal law of nature that the lesser should obey the pre-eminent'.

[12] Tacitus, *Annals*, XIII, 56: 'the rule of one's betters must be accepted'.

[13] *Politics*, V (1309); *ibid.* III (1283).

[14] i.e. 'the Desired'.

[15] Clearly an error for Gregory VII (Hildebrand) (trans.).

**Original Author Sort:** Botero, Giovanni

**Publication Date:** 11589.00.00.##

**Topic:** [Critics of the Natural Law Tradition](#)

**Subtopic:** [Machiavelli](#)

**Publication Date Range:** 1589-1590

**Source URL:** <http://www.nlnrac.org/critics/machiavelli/primary-source-documents/the-reason-of-state>