

### VASCO DA GAMA AT CALICUT

The following excerpt comes from the journal of a member of Da Gama's expedition to India in 1498. The party mistakenly identifies a Hindu temple as a Christian church and a statue of an Indian god as an image of Mary.

The city of Calicut is inhabited by Christians. They are of tawny complexion. Some of them have big beards and long hair, whilst others clip their hair short or shave the head, merely allowing a tuft to remain on the crown as a sign that they are Christians. They also wear moustaches. They pierce the ears and wear much gold in them. [The men] go naked down to the waist, covering their lower extremities with very fine cotton stuffs. But it is only the most respectable who do this, for the others manage as best they are able.

The women of this country, as a rule, are . . . of small stature. They wear jewels of gold round the neck, numerous bracelets on their arms, and rings set with precious stones on their toes. All these people are well disposed and apparently of mild temper. At first sight they seem covetous and ignorant. . . .

When we arrived at Calicut [the Indians] took us to a large church, and this is what we saw. The body of the church is as large as a monastery, all built of hewn stone and covered with tiles. At the main entrance rises a pillar of bronze as high as a mast, on the top of which was perched a bird, . . . In addition to this, there was another pillar as high as a man and very stout. In the center of the body of the church rose a chapel, all built of hewn stone, with a bronze door sufficiently wide for a man to pass, and stone steps leading up to it. Within this sanctuary stood a small image which they said represented Our Lady. . . .

Many other saints were painted on the walls of the Church, wearing crowns. They were painted variously, with teeth protruding an inch from the mouth, and four or five arms.

1. Why might the Portuguese have thought the Indians were "covetous and ignorant" on first sight?

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2. (a) What evidence was there that the images painted on the walls were not Christian saints?

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- (b) How might the Portuguese have avoided this mistake?

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3. In general, does this account seem to flatter or belittle the people of India? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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# Chapter 14 Africa and the Americas

## THE ARRIVAL OF EUROPEANS IN AFRICA

◆ Section 1 (pages 315-320)

The chronicle, or historical record, of Kilwa contains the following report of the arrival of Vasco da Gama's expedition.

During al-Fudail's reign there came news from the land of Mozambique that men had come from the land of the Franks. They had three ships, and the name of their captain was al-Mirate [Admiral Vasco da Gama]. After a few days, there came word that the ships had passed Kilwa and had gone on to Mafia [an adjoining island to the northward]. The lord of Mafia rejoiced, for he thought they [the Franks] were good and honest men. But those who knew the truth confirmed that they were corrupt and dishonest persons who had only come to spy out the land in

order to seize it. And they determined to cut the anchors of their ships so that they should drift ashore and be wrecked by the Muslims. The Franks learned of this and went on to Malindi [a trading city on the Kenya coast]. When the people of Malindi saw them, they knew they were bringers of war and corruption, and were troubled with very great fear. They gave them [the Franks] all they asked, water, food, firewood, and everything else. And the Franks asked for a pilot to guide them to India, and after that back to their own land—God curse it!

1. Find Malindi and Kilwa on the map on page 321. About how many miles separate the two cities?

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2. (a) How did the lord of Mafia first react to Da Gama's arrival?

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- (b) What did he later learn?

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3. Why did Da Gama and his crew leave Mafia for Malindi?

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4. How did the people of Malindi treat the foreigners?

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5. Based on what you have read in the text, were the Africans justified in mistrusting and fearing the Portuguese?

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# Chapter 15

# The Renaissance and Exploration

## THE PERFECT COURTIER

### ◆ Section 1 (pages 345-350)

Baldassare Castiglione was the Bishop of Avila and a well-known Venetian. His book of manners and polite society, *The Courtier*, was published in 1528 and was translated into several languages. A whole generation of young courtiers diligently followed his advice. In the selections on these two pages, Castiglione describes a courtly man and a courtly woman.

#### A Courtly Man

... Then coming to the bodily frame, I say it is enough if this be neither extremely short nor tall, for both of these conditions excite a certain contemptuous surprise, and men of either sort are gazed upon in much the same way that we gaze on monsters. Yet if we must offend in one of the two extremes, it is preferable to fall a little short of the just measure of height than to exceed it. For besides often being dull of intellect, men thus huge of body are also unfit for every exercise of agility, which thing I should much wish in the Courtier. And so I would have him well built and shapely of limb, and would have him show strength and lightness and suppleness, and know all bodily exercises that befit a man of war ...

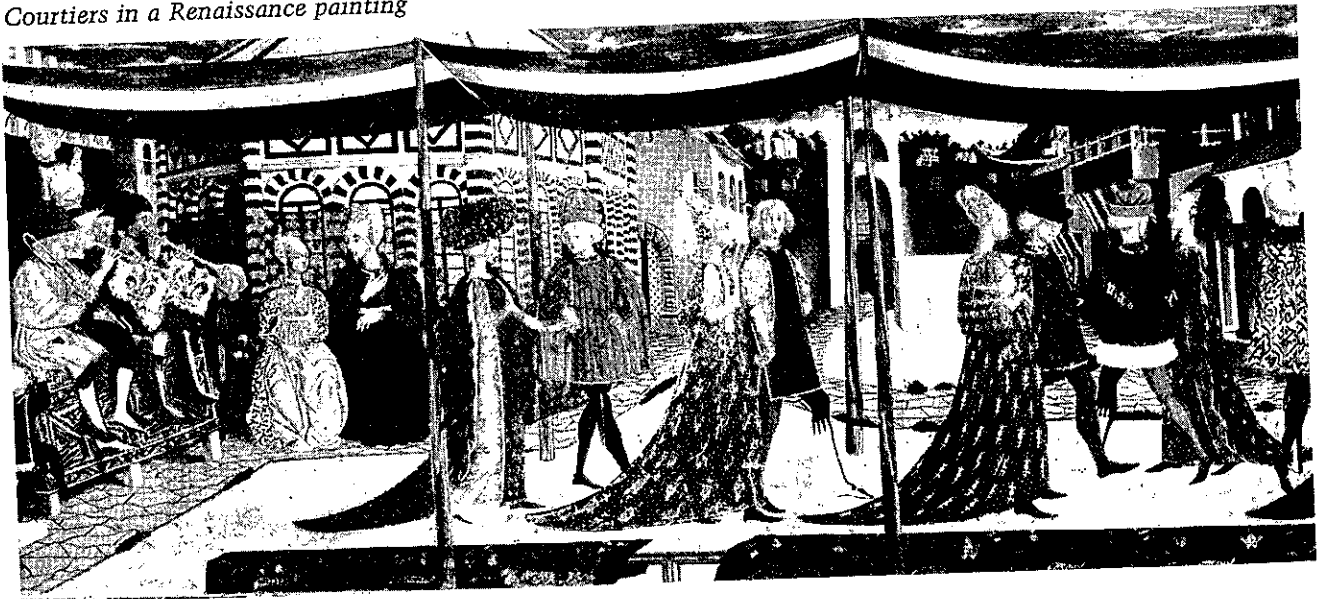
Both for his own sake and for that of his friends, he must understand the quarrels and differences that may arise, and must be quick to seize an advantage, always showing courage and prudence in all things. Nor should he be too ready to fight except when honor demands it. For

besides the great danger ... he who rushes into such affairs recklessly and without urgent cause, merits the severest censure even though he be successful. But when he finds himself so far engaged that he cannot withdraw without reproach, he ought to be most deliberate, both in the preliminaries to the duel and in the duel itself, and always show readiness and daring. ...

#### The Courtly Woman

... Methinks it is also fitting to tell ... of the Court Lady and when I have done this, I shall think myself quit of the greater part of my duty. Laying aside, then, those faculties of the mind that she ought to have in common with the Courtier (such as prudence, magnanimity, continence, and many others), and likewise those qualities that befit all women (such as kindness, discretion, ability to manage her husband's property and her house and children if she be married, and all those capacities that are requisite in

*Courtiers in a Renaissance painting*



(continued)

a good housewife), I say that in a lady who lives at court methinks above all else a certain pleasant affability is befitting, whereby she may be able to entertain politely every sort of man with agreeable and seemly [solemn] converse, . . .

And since words that carry no meaning of importance are vain, . . . the Court Lady must have . . . knowledge of many things, . . . Let her not go about mingling serious matters with her playful or humorous discourse, or jests and jokes with her serious discourse. And let her not stupidly

pretend to know that which she does not know, but modestly seek to do herself credit in that which she does know, . . . In this way she will be adorned with good manners, and will perform with perfect grace the bodily exercises proper to women. Her discourse will be rich and full of prudence, virtue, and pleasantness, and thus she will be not only loved but revered by everyone, and perhaps worthy to be placed side by side with this great Courtier as well in qualities of the mind as in those of the body.

1. (a) According to Castiglione, what is the proper bodily frame for a courtly man?

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(b) Why is extra height undesirable?

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2. Under what circumstances should a courtier be ready to fight?

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3. What qualities "befit" all women of this time?

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4. How must a court lady conduct her conversation?

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5. Compare Castiglione's description of a courtly man with his description of a courtly woman. What qualities do courtly men and women share? What qualities are unique to each?

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## BECOMING A PRINCE BY VILLAINY

In 1513, Niccolo Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, a book of advice to rulers. The following excerpt shows Machiavelli's views about the uses of villainy and cruelty.

But as there are still two ways of becoming prince which cannot be attributed entirely either to fortune or to ability, they must not be passed over, . . . These are when one becomes prince by some nefarious or villainous means, or when a private citizen becomes the prince of his country through the favour of his fellow-citizen.

[In ancient times] Agathocles the Sicilian rose not only from private life but from the lowest and most abject position to be King of Syracuse. The son of a potter, he led a life of the utmost wickedness through all the stages of his fortune. Nevertheless, his wickedness was accompanied by such vigor of mind and body that, having joined the militia, he rose through its ranks to be [a high official] of Syracuse. Having been appointed to this position, and having decided to become prince, and to hold with violence and without the support of others that which had been constitutionally granted him, and having imparted his design to Hamilcar the Carthaginian, who was fighting with his armies in Sicily, he called together one morning the people and senate of Syracuse, as if he had to deliberate on matters of importance to the republic, and at a given signal had all the senators and the richest men of the people killed by his soldiers. After their death he occupied and held rule over the city without any civil strife. And although he was twice beaten by the Carthaginians and ultimately besieged, he was able not only to defend the city, but leaving a portion of his forces for its defence, with the remainder he invaded Africa. In a short time he liberated Syracuse from the siege and brought the Carthaginians to great extremities, so that they were obliged to come to terms with him, and remain contented with the possession of Africa, leaving Sicily to Agathocles. . . . it was not by the favor of any person, but through the grades of the militia, in which [Agathocles] had advanced with a thousand hardships and perils, that he arrived at the position of prince, which he afterwards maintained by so many courageous and perilous expedients. It cannot be called virtue to kill one's fellow-citizens, betray one's friends, be without faith, without pity, and without religion; by these methods one may indeed gain power, but not glory. For if the virtues of Agathocles in braving and overcoming perils, and his greatness of soul in supporting and surmounting obstacles be considered, one sees no reason for holding him inferior to the most renowned captains. Nevertheless his barbarous



Niccolo Machiavelli

cruelty and inhumanity, together with his countless atrocities, do not permit of his being named among the most famous men. We cannot attribute to fortune or virtue that which he achieved without either.

Some may wonder how it came about that Agathocles, and others like him could, after infinite treachery and cruelty, live secure for many years in their country and defend themselves from external enemies without being conspired against by their subjects; . . . I believe this arises from the cruelties being exploited well or badly. Well committed may be called those (if it is permissible to use the word well of evil) which are perpetuated once for the need of securing one's self, and which afterwards are not persisted in, but are exchanged for measures as useful to the subjects as possible. Cruelties ill committed are those which, although at first few, increase rather than diminish with time. . . .

Whence it is to be noted, that in taking a state the conqueror must arrange to commit all his cruelties at once, so as not to have to recur to

(Continued)

them every day, and so as to be able, by not making fresh changes, to reassure people and win them over by benefiting them. Whoever acts otherwise, either through timidity or bad counsels, is always obliged to stand with knife in hand, and can never depend on his subjects, because

they, owing to continually fresh injuries are unable to depend upon him. For injuries should be done all together, so that being less tasted, they will give less offence. Benefits should be granted little by little, so that they may be better enjoyed.

1. How did the Sicilian Agathocles rise from a lowly position to a high government rank?

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2. What did Agathocles do to hold the position that had been "constitutionally granted" to him?

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3. What was Agathocles able to do in the defense of the city after becoming king?

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4. According to Machiavelli, Agathocles gained power but not glory. What is the difference?

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5. Machiavelli claimed that Agathocles lived secure in his country because his cruelties were "well committed." How does Machiavelli define a well-committed cruelty?

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6. According to Machiavelli, does the "end justify the means"? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

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## QUARRELS OVER THE SISTINE CHAPEL

In 1508, Pope Julius II commissioned Michelangelo to paint the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Throughout the project, the pope and the painter quarrelled. Michelangelo refused to show the various paintings that make up the great domed ceiling until each was completed; the pope wanted to see each painting in progress. The following selection taken from *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, by Giorgio Vasari, describes the relationship between the pontiff and the artist.

When the work was uncovered everyone rushed to see it from every part and remained dumbfounded. The Pope, being thus encouraged to greater designs, richly rewarded Michelangelo, who sometimes said in speaking of the great favors showered upon him by the Pope that he fully recognized his powers, and if he sometimes used hard words, he healed them by gifts and favors. Thus, when Michelangelo once asked leave to go and spend the feast of St. John in Florence, and requested money for this, the Pope said, "When will this chapel be ready?" "When I can get it done, Holy Father." The Pope struck him with his mace, repeating, "When I can, when I can, I will make you finish it!" Michelangelo, however, returned to his house to prepare for his journey to Florence, when the Pope sent Cursio, his chamberlain, with five hundred crowns to appease him and excuse the Pope, who feared what Michelangelo might do. As Michelangelo knew the Pope, and was really devoted to him, he laughed, especially as such things always turned to his advantage, and the Pope did everything to retain his good-will.



Detail from the Sistine Chapel

1. Why did Pope Julius II wish to appease Michelangelo after their quarrel concerning the chapel?

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2. On page 354, the text states that Julius II loved art and power equally. How does this passage reflect the pope's conflict between his love of power and his love of art? Which wins in the end?

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## A PROFILE OF ISABELLA

Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain won fame not only for sponsoring the voyages of Christopher Columbus but also for their dignity and governing ability. Many accounts of the time, however, suggest that Isabella surpassed her husband in many ways. Her religious intolerance, which included approval of the expulsion of the Moors and the Jews, was not recognized as a fault by those who recorded her character and achievements for history. An Italian wrote the following glowing account of the queen.

As to her figure, stature, and beauty, whatever I have said of the King, can be said of [Isabella]. Whatever in the King expressed dignity, in the Queen was also clothed with grace and charm, the presence of both was touched with majesty, but in the opinion of most people the Queen was the handsomer, and had a quicker intelligence, a larger heart and a more serious nature. She was an excellent Queen, a great lover of virtue, desirous of praise and spotless fame. . . . She spoke Spanish with elegance and great dignity. She did not know Latin, but she took pleasure in listening to Latin speeches and sermons, for she thought highly of the language when well spoke, and after the wars in Spain were over, although she was still very busy with important matters, she wished so much to know it that she began to take lessons, and made so much progress that she not only was able to understand the ambassadors and orators but could easily translate Latin into Spanish. As to Church matters, it is hard to say whether she was more diligent or more generous, for she possessed both virtues to perfection . . . when there was a bishopric or other high ecclesiastical office to be filled, she took more account of virtue, good character, and learning than of riches or high birth, even if the candidates were her relations.



Queen Isabella of Spain

1. What virtues made Isabella an "excellent Queen"? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What kind of people did Isabella choose to fill church offices?  
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3. Renaissance thinkers believed that the ideal individual tried to master every art. How did Isabella fit this description of an ideal person?  
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