Nothing damages the health of a prince more than the passions of the spirit; medicine can provide no remedy for this.

Anxieties generally occupy last place in the list of things doctors define as unnatural and are placed in an intermediate position between those considered according to nature and those against nature. They should, however, rightly claim first place, given that, more than others, they are capable of heavily undermining the health to the point of provoking severe illnesses. It is easy to appreciate the effective extent of passions of the spirit and the profound revolution they are capable of causing in the blood from one moment to the next, as their effects are clearly shown by characteristic signs and clues appearing on the external parts of the body, mainly the face. Cambreo has written comprehensively on these matters in his book De Pass. Carac. In a state of anger, which is the most fervent of all the passions, there is a first phase when the blood is withdrawn inside, followed immediately by a second phase when it is projected violently outwards. In this way, anyone affected by anger has a flushed face and bloodshot eyes, the mouth becomes bitter, the lips foam, the pulse is fast and strong, speech is blocked, the movements become agitated and other signs appear that are typical of a person mad with fury. These are the words Oreste uses: the disturbed spirit is unable to turn its strength toward that which is the object of its hatred and, threatening and troubled, gathering all its strength, it expels the spirits and blood outside with the driving force of the heart. Because of the flow of animal spirits, the systoles become so frequent that the blood, pumped through the arteries to the various organs, is prevented from quickly going by way of the
veins and perforates and reddens the skin. Opposite mechanisms act in the case of fear, when the spirit is aware of not having the necessary strength to distance itself from that which threatens it. A general contraction of the fibres prevents the circulation of the blood or, better, there is a retraction of the blood through the arteries to its origin – which has made some suggest that other movements of the blood include going backward. A phenomenon of mechanical necessity between body and spirit occurs on the basis of the law of sympathy; the movements that take place in the spirit begin in the whole mass of fluids throughout the body. So the fear that afflicts men has a sudden equivalent in the pallor of their face, the body is dumbfounded like an effigy, the mind is stupefied and the voice expires in the throat. This is what happens in every kind of passion, each one being revealed with its own signs and characteristics, and already noted by the abovementioned author. It must be concluded that disturbances of the spirit are accompanied by an upset of the blood and all the other fluids. It is not unusual that, in the grip of temper, the natural economy is overturned and the state of good health easily lost. Writers note many examples of people dying suddenly as a result of a great onslaught of anger and similar examples of people who, beset by great terror or sudden joy after profound sadness, have expired.

If the effects of the spirit have a great influence on common people and on the humble, as we see daily, they must have an even greater influence on those who, although placed above others, are unable with all their powers to obtain that which they desire with the greatest passion, that is, to prevent accidents and ills about which they do not stop thinking of, even during sleep. Among those who possess principalities, realms and empires, who would not wish to have the fortune of Augustus, his prosperity, the extension of his empire and his longevity? But one must read the forty-fifth chapter of the seventh book of Pliny's *Natural History*, where he lists a long series of ills and misfortunes that befell Augustus, so many that it is impossible not to consider him a very unhappy prince, despite being taken as an example of happiness. Augustus used to feel sorry for himself, mainly with regard to the behaviour of his daughter Julia, whose virtue was questioned; Macrobius mentions, in the fifth chapter of the second book of the *Saturnali*, that Augustus used to say to his friends: “I have two
beloved daughters, Julia and the Republic, the weight of both falls entirely upon me”.

According to the testimonies left by many writers, when Augustus heard the news of defeat of Varus in Germany, he was gripped by such great fear and anguish that he ordered the city to be watched over by guards until such time as the revolt should took place, almost as if the Germans had arrived in Italy, and made solemn vows to Jupiter so that the Republic would be saved. He was so overcome, that for many months he stopped having his beard shaved and hair cut, at times he beat his head against the door, shouting, Quinctilius Varus, give me back my legions.

Despite Augustus having a healthy and pleasant appearance, we read that he was delicate and often afflicted by serious illnesses, such that Antonio Musa, a learned doctor, attempted an exceptional therapy that put the patient in danger after not obtaining any result in his condition, even using the remedies considered most suitable. As Pliny says “Augustus came out of serious danger thanks to a heroic cure”, though this is not what is normally done by doctors, who, says Celsus, “never risk unproven therapies on important persons for fear they will be accused of having killed the sick person in the case of him not recovering”.

I think the poor health and frequent illnesses of that prince can be put down to anxiety, given that he was unable to avoid being taxed by the contrasting situations of an unjust fate and happiness. Given that princes who rule over the people do not lack perfect reasons for altering their temper daily, it is no wonder that their health is so poor; on the contrary, it is a wonder that they do not fall ill more often. The furious turmoil that gripped Europe in the first decade of this century and marked the fate of princes, such that it was necessary to make public vows to our Lord God to bring them to reason and restore peace, is well known. If princes take their own health to heart, they must as far as possible avoid violent disturbances of the spirit, certainly without aspiring to attain that state of apathy ambitiously promoted by some philosophers, which would be like removing the man from the man; indeed, as St Jerome says: “As long as we lodge in the tabernacle of our body and are surrounded by the flesh that is weak, we will have the ability to moderate and limit our affections and passions, but may never manage to eliminate them”.
May they enjoy, suffer, sadden, may they feel compassion, may they, at times, get angry, may their anger be worthy of a prince. As Ovid says of Jupiter: “Great passions turn in the spirit and furies worthy of Jupiter”.

We also read in the Holy Scriptures that the anger of God punishes the sins of men. It is very interesting to note that he who gets angry or furious, and commits some action in that state, is later remorseful, as in the case of the emperor Hadrian, referred to by Galen in the *De cogn.& cur. anim. morbis*. In a moment of anger he gouged out the eye of one of his servants and subsequently, seeing him one-eyed, was moved by compassion and promised to give him whatever he wanted and requested. Faced with the servant’s silence, the emperor renewed his promise and the servant finally replied that he did not want anything apart from the eye he had lost, which the emperor was not able to give him. So it must be reason that holds the reins and controls the impulses of the spirit, and in particular that anger to which it is easier for the powerful to give in to.

“If you really want to command, control your spirit, keeping it in check”.

Moderation is highly recommended in attacks of anger; practising it, the prince endears himself to his subjects, who are thus reassured by the fact that he does nothing that is not inspired by prudence and justice. What Claudiano writes applies precisely to the case of princes: “He who acts inspired by reason, not anger, is similar to the gods”.

So reason is the only remedy for the passions, in that it is able to control the serious risks they pose for health. In this field one must turn to moral philosophy, not medicine, for enlightenment. In the end, it is a case of not invoking anything but that same reason with which the characters are described by Galen in his important work *De cogn.& cur. anim. morbis*. Regarding this matter, however, the mission of the doctor in protecting the health of a prince ought not to be seen as entirely useless. He maintains a role in showing which passion the prince is most subject to, whether anger or melancholy, or others still, something that, it must be believed, he ought to know better than anyone else. He will have the opportunity to establish a diet and a lifestyle that are able to moderate the predisposition and counter its effects. So, if a prince has an exuberant temperament, the physician must prescribe a diet that represses the
fervour of the blood and the spirits, encouraging the consumption of acidic or diluted wine; in short, a contrasting diet. If, on the other hand, he is inclined to melancholy by his natural temperament, the doctor must advise foods that enrich the blood with volatile particles capable of enlivening the spirits, if necessary recommending the consumption of reasonably full-bodied wines that are more suited to his temperament. This is the path to follow in the case of melancholy subjects or those who need more decisive cures. It is possible in this way to block the acid component of the blood, not unlike how vitriol, sulphuric acids, and other acids still sweeten the wine with the spirit. As the proverbial saying goes, “offer cider to the melancholy and wine to those with sorrows of the heart”.

In Homer’s *Odyssey*, Helen offers Menelaus and Telemachus, Odysseus’ son, the remedy for melancholy, which is the heart’s-ease wine she was given in Egypt by Polydamma, wife of King Thon.

As soon as the doctor notices that his prince is deteriorating and the signs of suffering due to some particularly lasting passion appear on his face, he must advise him quickly of the need to resort to the appropriate remedies, so as to avert the rapid appearance of illness. This may be an adequate stimulus for chasing from his mind the ideas that torment him.
What literary studies should be pursued the prince so that they do not have a negative influence on his well-being.

In the performance of their duties, princes at times must resort to writing. For this reason it is possible for a prince to get caught up in a kind of passion for the study of letters and, as is said, aspire to laurels; that is, he wants to reach first place in this field, too. But the results are often dubious and, what is worse, can seriously threaten his health. It is nevertheless proper that princes, who are always placed above all others, do not appear completely lacking in letters and music. A prince will be less appreciated and liked by his subjects if his figure, as a champion of all the virtues, does not correspond to that which the latter pretend to have. It is highly recommended that literary studies be pursued diligently in early youth, particularly humanistic subjects such as Latin, rhetoric, and poetry. A prince will receive much honour as a result of these studies and obtain another kind of advantage, that of educating himself, freeing himself from an original uncouthness.

"Liberal studies, cultivated diligently, educate the manners, removing from these all uncouthness".

It is also expedient that those born to govern are moderately versed in letters and also interested in the more sublime sciences – philosophy and mathematical disciplines. This is so that, when he has to attend a public debate, he will at least understand the crux of the matter. It is not, however, indispensable that he understands the subtleties of logic or of "rhetorical arguments made with well-turned sentences". It is necessary that he is instructed more in moral than natural philosophy. The fundamental precepts for
this task are available both from contemporary writers and those of the past, from whom it is possible to gain excellent instruction with little effort, which is of use in governing himself and others. Those who are totally dedicated to the study of letters, to the point of achieving fame, are well aware of the cost, in terms of time, energy and health, of the expression of praise: “Oh, a man of letters!”. These are people who have ended up languishing over books and have spent their lives in the light of a lamp, like Demosthenes, who was said to have consumed more oil for his lamp than wine.

“He who intends reaching the desired end in the race makes numerous attempts and does numerous exercises from an early age, putting up with hot and cold”, said Horace in verse. Given that it is impossible to achieve recognition in the literary field without considerable effort, sleepless nights and consequent damage to health, princes, who have come into the world not so much for themselves as for others, must take care to conserve their health and be wise in moderation. Extensive damage can be caused to a healthy organism from excessive zeal for study and the examination of abstruse arguments; the stomach is the first to suffer from study conducted in an exaggerated fashion. Indeed, the natural heat and animal spirits are removed from their function, which is digesting foods. As Celsus says in the first book, De medicina, “To the weak of stomach, a group that includes many of the inhabitants of cities, and almost all literary men”.

So the weak of stomach must pay the utmost attention to study and to sleepless nights, risky conditions that foster the onset of damage to many organs; indeed, the chyle, the blood and then the whole organism suffers. Q. Sereno’s expression that the stomach is king of the whole organism is appropriate. Its normal operation affects the limbs giving them strength. Among the other organs and apparatus, the head, stronghold of Minerva and residence of the spirit, suffers serious abuses due to the tension of the nerves and the ecstasy that occurs in sublime contemplation. The other parts of the organism are deprived of the light of the soul and the result is sluggishness and indolence; the blood flows more slowly in the veins causing a disruption to the economy of the entire organism. Many negative effects are caused to the organism by the effort the mind must make to study letters. Plutarch, in his book De Pre. Salub., said pertinently that, in the relations between body and soul,
the former does not escape damage caused to the latter. As the soul is completely taken up by the passion of study, the organism suffers. Plato, too, in his *Timeus*, says that when the soul is intent on studying, the body is weakened to the point that it is often necessary to completely abandon one's studies. Considerable damage is caused to the health by aspiring to fame in the literary field, and, in any case, it is difficult to pursue both fame and health at the same time. Indeed, it is indispensable to spend time over books and at times to write, things that cannot be done if not assuming a fixed posture for many hours, be it seated or standing. In both cases the organism suffers serious damage. In the seated position a numbness of the thighs and legs is caused by compression; in the upright position the muscles tire from the constant tension. In both cases the blood flows more slowly. It is worthwhile noting that the clergy of those orders primarily devoted to the study of letters are all emaciated and depressed, despite otherwise conducting a regular lifestyle and eating properly. Other clergy, however, of different orders, who apply themselves more to the contemplation of heavenly things and the practice of piety, are nice and plump, strong and rosy cheeked, despite leading an austere life, walking barefoot and dressing the same in both summer and winter. Given that a prince must take care of his health to the benefit not only of himself but also of others over whom he governs, he should dedicate himself to studies in moderation, only for pleasure and for a few hours a day. If he really must stay up, it is better that he do so to ensure a safer sleep for his subjects, like Epaminondas, prince of Thebes, who, according to Plutarch, having been questioned as to why he scoured the walls of the city during the night, replied that he stayed sober and awake to allow others to drink or sleep. Homer, too, in the second book of the *Iliad*, represents Jupiter as being always attentive and the other gods as all sleeping deeply. “The other gods and all the fighting men slept through the night, but there was no easy sleep for Zeus”.

Apart from that, it is observed that princes who are devoted body and soul to the study of sublime sciences have not been particularly fortunate and have done ill not only to their health but also to their fame and respect, such that, at times, they have been the object of jests and jeering. History tells of the many ailments suffered by King Alphonso of Castile, who left us the astronomi-
cal tables. He was entirely taken up in observing the movements of the planets, particularly the erratic rotations of Mars, and it was thought that he did not pay sufficient attention to his errors in governing the people. Furthermore, it is said that he had become impious to the point of wanting to extract the mystery out of the divine works, like that person of whom Luciano speaks. The emperor Julian, called the Apostate, was distinguished in the study of eloquence and in all kinds of erudition, as shown by the works he has left us, but history tells of the superstitions he believed in and the end he came to. Henry the Eighth, King of England, to whom Ludovico Vives has dedicated commentaries on St Augustine's book, *De Civitate Dei*, was a lover of letters and wrote a book against Luther that earned him the title of defender of the Catholic faith. But everyone knows the errors that writer subsequently made and he himself was aware of these, according to what the writers say that, on dying, he confessed to having lost everything. James Stuart I, King of Great Britain, too busy reading books on liturgy and studying theology, was scornfully nicknamed the theologian king by the English. He thought he excelled in those subjects and instigated an argument with Cardinal Bellarmino in certain writings he published, which were marked by their acrimony and insults. Bellarmino responded to these precisely, in a no less learned manner and with politeness and reverence toward the royal person. He, a cardinal prince, had studied in the very religious school of the Jesuit fathers. Antoninus Pius earned himself the nickname of philosopher, but did not deserve the title of magnanimous prince; indeed, he did not take part in any military expedition and proved himself too soft in punishing criminals and in putting up with Faustina's public impropriety. Princes who devote themselves to letters more than they ought often have little fame among their subjects, being seen as more suited to the life of the convent than a military one. Romulus, a child of his hard times, who hardly knew how to divide the year into ten months, was praised by Ovid as follows: "You, oh Romulus, knew arms better than the stars, and your main concern was defeating and overpowering neighbouring peoples".

If a prince intends to pursue varied learning and erudition in every branch of science, it will be very easy for him, with little effort, with honour and, the thing that counts, without putting his own health in danger, to maintain poets, orators, philosophers,
The Health of Princes

mathematicians and theologians. He can then hear dissertations from them on varied subjects at any hour, lunch or dinner, thus learning from them what is normally learnt by study in sleepless nights from silent teachers, that is to say, from books. Francis I, King of France and great champion of letters, observed precisely this custom. La Bruyer mentions in the premise to the book, *De re cibaria*, that he had the most distinguished scholars in every field of knowledge at his side when dining. Popes Leo X and Clement VII had the same custom. They were both of the Medici house and true descendants of the Mecenate line who, as if by right, were inclined to encourage and maintain the most illustrious men of various disciplines in every age. The same behaviour is observed in the noble family of the Princes of Este, who were accustomed to having their court full of learned men, something that allowed renowned writers and poets, such as Ariosto and Tasso, to hand down their works to posterity.

So princes can easily acquire ideas, also on difficult questions of philosophy, mathematics, experimental sciences and any other discipline, listening to the discourse of the learned, either away from meals or at such moments as when Domitian used to while away the time impaling flies with a little spear. In this way, without torturing their own mind and with no risk to their health, they can “exploit the follies of others”, as Pliny used to say of those who did not want to build new houses as they thought they could cheaply buy magnificent ones built by others at great cost. It is astonishing to see the extent to which philosophers, mathematicians and researchers of natural sciences languish and labour to solve problems, to see how many nights they spend awake and, at times, without obtaining any result. Dionysus of Siracusa once made a vow to Jupiter of a golden crown and gave an ingot of fine gold to a jeweller to make it. But the latter kept back some of the gold, replacing it with silver. Dionysus learnt of the fraud committed by the craftsman, but as the crown was excellently made, and thinking that the great god Jupiter would have happily accepted it anyway, decided not to destroy it and not recast it, but to make another one in pure gold. At that point Dionysus wanted to know how much silver had been used in the alloy. He called Archimedes and asked him to apply all his intelligence to calculating how much of that metal had gone into the crown in place of the missing gold. On hearing this problem,
Archimedes, dumbfounded and surprised, went away, racking his brain because he did not think it possible to identify the proportion. Finally, when he was at the baths, he had an ingenious idea: emerging from the water and reasoning by deduction, he decided he could use mechanical means to discover how much silver was in the alloy and then, knowing the proportion, work out the quantity in weight of gold considering the equivalent weight of silver. So, to his great merit, he managed to satisfy Dionysus. Q. Remnio Sannio put this discovery of Archimedes into fine verse. Erudition costs little to princes but is costly to the ordinary mortals who devote themselves to it. Princes can also easily reap rich rewards if they learn the languages of Europe, in addition to Latin. This could easily and even pleasantly be done, given that they have opportunities to talk for several hours a day with expert, well educated people when free of their duties. Mithridates, king of Pontus and Bythnia, was highly esteemed because, as Aulus Gellius notes, his subjects included 22 ethnic groups with different idioms and he spoke to most of those people without the need of interpreters. On this subject it is pleasant to recount an interesting story that is worth remembering and can be read in the first chapter of the second book of Sermoni Vari, written in Italian by Lorenzo Cappellonio. When Charles V was in Bologna to be crowned emperor by the pope, Clement VII, Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan, went to Bologna to defend himself before the emperor against accusations of high treason and of secretly conspiring with the king of France. Thanks to the support given by the Venetian delegates, he had obtained a certificate known as a “safeguard” from the emperor and, when he then had the chance to appear before him, after paying due honours, he took out the safeguard and showed it to him, saying that he did not think he had done anything improper in resorting to that immunity. However, although he was sure the Emperor would never have doubted his fairness and honesty, he had to defend himself against his ministers who were hostile to him. He then explained the facts and testimonies of his loyalty and devotion to the Holy Roman Emperor. Sforza spoke in Italian and the Spaniard Antonio de Leva, who was present, constantly contradicted him in his language, interrupting him so many times that he found himself having difficulty keeping to the point of his speech. When he real-
ized the intention of the Spanish minister, he continued to speak, but in German, a language the Spaniard did not know. In this way he was able to present all his explanations, though without being able to prevent the silenced de Leva resorting to obvious signs of indignation. In the end, Sforza convinced the generous Emperor of his innocence and received recognition from him for the great prudence and wisdom he had shown. Sforza was confirmed duke of Milan, despite the remonstrations of Antonio de Leva who, at a certain point, said in a loud voice that the duchy of Milan was thought more important than all of Spain.