

[Epistolae, engl.]

The Letters of
MARSILIO FICINO



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SHEPHEARD-WALWYN

pray and implore the heavenly ruler, without whom no earthly activity is fruitful, to direct your will to his and to guide the issues of the magistracy and state according to your will.

Next, I greatly rejoice for the magistracy itself, because it will be worthily filled by a man who is both pious and learned. I also rejoice for my Piero, not so much that he has recently attained this high office, but that God has so long ordained that he should be more than worthy of any human office.

Therefore earnestly give thanks to God and humbly commend yourself to Him. Farewell.



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Non est suavis absque amico suauissimo melodia

No melody is sweet without the sweetest friend

Marsilio Ficino to Sebastiano Foresi.

WHAT are you doing today, my Foresi? Are you playing the lyre? Take heed¹ that you do not play it without Marsilio! Otherwise, if you break faith with me, the strings of your lyre will sound completely out of tune to you. As often as I sing with my lyre, I sing in harmony with you. To me no melody is sweet without the sweetest friend.

Commend me to my Landino, a true friend. What news of Piero del Nero? Whenever you see him give him my greetings.

11th August, 1476.²



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Veritas sua potentia potius quam aliena defenditur

*Truth needs no defence other than
its own strength*

Marsilio Ficino to Pietro Placentino, Apostolic Commissary.

THE Pope has sent you, as a vigorous general, to take up arms¹ against the enemies of divine wisdom. But it is the priests of Pallas² rather than the soldiers of Mars who muster in wisdom's defence. God forbade me to serve under treacherous Mars; He ordered me to follow the standard of invincible Minerva. May I be as successful in reaching her as I have long so willingly followed her!

I am therefore sending you these arms with which I fight unceasingly and with all my strength against the enemies of truth. As a dutiful son of Pallas and patron of the muses, you will take care to see that I am able to forge still more weapons of this kind. The man who assails the enemies of truth with spears fights as best he may, but he who attacks them with true reason is in truth always victorious.



IO

Venus Martem, Iupiter Saturnum domat

Venus subdues Mars, and Jupiter Saturn¹

Marsilio Ficino to Rinaldo Orsini, Archbishop of Florence.

A FEW days ago the illustrious Papal Commissary, Pietro Placentino, having been requested in your name, first by letter and then very strongly by word of mouth, not only most generously promised what I had sought concerning the obligation of revenue, but also confirmed