Giovanni Della Casa and the Galateo
On Life and Success in the Late Italian Renaissance*

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I

Giovanni Della Casa's work on manners, the Galateo, has suffered from many misinterpretations. Some have maintained that the book was read little; others that it dealt with a most superficial topic—etiquette; still others that Della Casa and his Galateo were typical of the Renaissance and that the book was a pallid imitation of Baldassare Castiglione's Courtier but from a democratic viewpoint.¹ The evidence we have about the man and the work contradicts these views. The Galateo was a bestseller in the schools and houses of Italy up to the nineteenth century and after. Certainly, it is not a philosophic treatise, but its precepts are much more than rules on how to behave at the table. Furthermore, the book is not a democratic imitation of the Courtier but, rather, a class work directed to aristocrats and, as such, mirroring the rise of the nobility in Italian life during the sixteenth century. Nor is it representative of the Renaissance, but a contrasting blend of two worlds with different values—Humanism and the Counter Reformation.

II

The author's nephew, Annibale Rucellai, the heir of Della Casa's literary compositions and the man responsible for the publication of the Galateo after his uncle's death, had certain grave misgivings about the book. He felt that the work would neither advance nor perhaps even maintain his uncle's reputation. Considerable pressure had to be exerted by "relatives" and "friends", and by Erasmo Gemini de Cesis, a trusted secretary of Della Casa, before Annibale sent Della Casa's Galateo and the other Italian works to the press in 1558. In fact, for a while after, and until the Galateo became a bestseller, he regretted having allowed its publication.²

We do not know for sure how Della Casa felt about his treatise. For one thing, he does not seem to have ever mentioned it in his correspondence with friends. Moreover, when, once before his death, he instructed his nephew to burn all his works because he thought that none of them was worth preserving, he did not spare the Galateo.³ According to Annibale, "The Galateo was composed only as a joke, to see how well our language would tolerate a style so humble and pedestrian; and I know that the author considered it to be of little worth."⁴

Della Casa was probably indulging in the common Renaissance mannerism of dismissing one's own work as of little value. But if he and his nephew Annibale were sincere, then they were guilty of one of the great misjudgments of history. Published in Venice by Bevilacqua in October, 1558, together with the Rime and the Orazione per Piacenza, the Galateo was already on the market a month later.⁵ The work raised some criticism because of Della Casa's comments on Dante's language,⁶ but was a bestseller from the start.

The Galateo appeared in thirty-eight editions before the end of the sixteenth century, and I have counted no less than one hundred and eighty-seven editions from 1558 to 1971.⁷ There was no place in Western Europe which did not feel the impact of the
treatise. It was translated into French in 1562, into English in 1576, into Latin in 1580, into Spanish in 1585, and into German in 1597. Many copies even found their way to the Americas. The work became a standard text in some European schools. In 1580, the Latin edition of the *Galateo* was suggested as one of the exceptions of a non-classical writer that a teacher would make for the young people at a school in Rostock. In 1597, the treatise, always in its Latin version, was used for grades two and three in a gymnasium in the Calvinist city of Bremen. In France, the work became “the manual of etiquette commonly used in the best colleges, those of the Jesuits.” In 1617, an adaptation of the *Galateo* was prepared for the Jesuit schools at La Fleche and at Pont-à Mousson. In sixteenth-century England, Gabriel Harvey noted in one of his letters that “Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas have virtually been banished from Cambridge, and Castiglione, Della Casa, and Guazzo rule in their stead.”

The term *Galateo* itself became synonymous with good manners and, in Italian, it still holds this meaning. In the sixteenth century, there was a similar tendency in Spain and France as well. The Spanish translator of the treatise, Domingo de Becerra, commented that “in noticing bad manner or lack of civility, it is usual to quote as a proverb: it is not in the *Galateo*.” The French translator of Guazzo’s *Civile Conversazione* (Lyons, 1579), stated that he does not dwell on young people’s proper behavior because “it would mean reciting the *Galateo*.”

Della Casa wrote the *Galateo* toward the end of a life which had seen him engaged full time as a papal careerist and diplomat, and part time as an eloquent humanist and tragic poet. It was also a time when, after his nunciature in Venice, Della Casa felt that he had completely given up his worldly ambitions. Disillusioned in his hope of becoming a cardinal, rather bitter toward his former patrons, the Farnese family, for not fulfilling this dream, and feeling that his whole life was a failure, he retired first to Venice in mid 1551, and later, in early 1553, to a beautiful abbey at Nervesa, near Treviso, about sixty miles north of Venice. There he wrote many works, among which the *Galateo* was to become the most important of his prose compositions. His most meaningful afterthoughts were therefore dedicated to good manners, not to politics and history, like those of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, and as Della Casa’s own experience might well have warranted.

Della Casa’s choice was motivated by his temperament, his aspirations, and his environment. He was a different man from Machiavelli and Guicciardini, although he shared with Guicciardini a realistic approach to life. But unlike those two, who saw themselves as actors and at times as influential policy makers in the politics of their time, Della Casa performed his office in the spirit of a bureaucrat, a trusted servant, following the orders of a master. Moreover, although wide-ranging and diversified, Della Casa’s activities during his years in the papal diplomatic service, from the later 1530’s to the end of the succeeding decade, had seen no earth-shaking events such as the other two Florentines had witnessed. Public affairs were the lifeline of Guicciardini and Machiavelli. Without them, their world seemed to crumble. Della Casa, on the other hand, had always been torn between his career and a desire to devote himself to literature. When two of his friends bought their way into the Apostolic Chamber, he commented, “I have heard how the number of the insane people buying this servitude [a career] has increased.” When he
was forced to leave Rome in the early 1550's, he suffered not so much from a longing for public life, as had been the case with Machiavelli and Guicciardini, as from a bitter resentment against the papal court, for which he blamed both his spiritual misery and his failure to receive a cardinal's hat.

But the most important reason why Della Casa shied away from writing a political treatise, was simply that times had changed. In the early two decades of the century, a daring solution to Italy's crisis could still seem reasonable in the passionate heart of Machiavelli. And in the 1530's, a statesman such as Guicciardini could still feel it his duty to explain the reasons for Italy's ruin. But in Della Casa's time, it was not the life of a state or of a number of states, that was at stake, but rather, the survival of the individual. It was necessary now to refurnish one's talents and social skills in order to become part, or remain part, of a ruling elite which was becoming increasingly a closed caste.  

Like the practical man that he was, Della Casa's main intellectual curiosity was focused on the investigations of methods for survival and success in this difficult world. In another treatise, De officiis, written by 1543, he had provided guidelines for men in positions of command and, even more, for gentlemen forced to assume the position of "lower friends". In the Galateo, he documented what he had assumed in the Latin treatise, since he dealt with the upbringing of the gentleman to the life described in De officiis. The weapons which Della Casa considered essential in the struggle against the challenges of everyday life, were a good education and proper manners.

Education always figured highly among Della Casa's ideals, and he was one of the best educated men of his period. By the time he had reached old age, he could hold his own with philologists of the fame and skill of a Pier Vettori. In addition he knew Latin almost as well as Italian, although his Latin writings, unlike his volgare, possess a certain stiffness. He managed to acquire all the mechanical skills of a humanist scholar: the ability to write good Latin, an understanding of Greek (he could translate with ease from Greek into Latin), a facility for editing texts, a thorough knowledge of all major classical sources, and an enthusiasm for new books and editions of the classics. By his thirties, he had mastered some of the most important authors of antiquity: Hesiod, Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, Xenophon, Euripides, Terence. Nevertheless, he used them sparingly, as a good humanist was wont to do, and never made a useless show of his skill. During his lifetime, his published output was practically nil, and yet, as a humanist, he enjoyed an international reputation. The Farnese family, for example, and especially Cardinal Alessandro, Paul III's grandson, one of the most sophisticated and cultured aristocrats of the time, employed Della Casa's talents continuously until, to quote Della Casa's own crude expression, "di quelle cose fatte a caso ne ho piene le casse." And in 1543, the young Dauphin of France requested the manuscript of De officiis. Even, Vettori was ready to ask for help or to make corrections in his own work, according to Della Casa's suggestions, and the well-educated cardinal, Marcello Cervini, used Della Casa's dexterity to supervise the collation of a classical text.

Della Casa left his thoughts on education in a few letters to his nephews, Annibale and Pandolfo Rucellai. He saw a close connection between education and good manners. Studying was necessary to perfect the gentleman. You do not realize, Della Casa warned his nephew Annibale, how much you have been hurt by your careless attitude toward education. If you had kept studying as you promised you would, you would now be the
most literate gentleman among your friends. Della Casa begged and ordered Annibale not to follow his youthful inclination to shy away from books, but to study every day all he could. He agreed that learning is not easy to come by, that a student needs to be patient, because there is a little bitterness in learning, but if it were easy, he insisted, learning would not be in demand. 29 One's whole future, he maintained, is based on a good education. "You must understand [he wrote to Annibale] that a good deal of the condition of your life . . . will depend on the work that you will do this summer. If it is fruitful, which it will certainly be if you want it to be, you will put your life on the right path; otherwise, you will go the wrong way." 30

The education which Della Casa emphasized was based primarily on the classics. Keep Terence and Vergil with you always. Read them just for amusement. Familiarize yourself with them; when proper, quote them; when this is not proper, read, recite, translate, memorize them. And never do without them. 31 The classics are the means of achieving a balanced view of life. If you want to be able to discern virtue from vice, "it is well to learn the Greek and Latin language in such a way as to talk by yourself with the ancient masters, who are so unlike these modern goldsmiths [authors]. They [the ancient masters] will give it [the way to discern virtue from vice] willingly, and will uncover the wonderful treasures of their knowledge, which will teach you not only how a man should talk, but also how he should behave and act." The classics will give Annibale also, all the other virtues. "Because of this, try to learn . . . their beautiful and bountiful language, which is more graceful than all the harmonies of the world. Believe me, I cannot deceive you, because if you listen once to the voices of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and the many other authors, with the proper disposition . . ., you will realize that, except knowledge, goodness, and virtuous works, all other glories are vain, perishable, frivolous, and childish." 32

Education was the vehicle to success in Della Casa's thought. His reproach to a man who wanted to retire to write some philosophical compositions, is typical of his attitude. Repeating Cardinal Salviati's rebuke to the would-be philospher, "You will always be a poor man", but in a harsher tone, Della Casa added, "Your study is more glorious than fruitful." 33 His discussion of the classics with Annibale was prompted by an attempt to distinguish a moderate from an excessive ambition. And in any case, Della Casa added, even excessive ambition is a lesser vice than many others. 34 Annibale is eager for success, and Della Casa prods him by arguing that his career will be based on what he is going to do during the summer. 35 Many go to the Orient or to the Americas; others go to war, enduring dangers and hardships; all these men, however, acquire less glory than one can get through education. It is only necessary to be patient and to accumulate one's learning, before reaping the harvest. 36

Della Casa's emphasis on the practical value of education puts in its proper perspective what he tried to do in the Galateo. The work has often been accused of being merely a treatise on etiquette, that is, a book emphasizing outward manners. 37 There is some truth to the criticism, since Della Casa himself maintains that good manners are not the peers of magnanimity and generosity, and that "they are made up of nothing more than words and actions." 38 In fact, proper behavior is only a part of a young man's curriculum. Education makes up the rest. Moreover, "if it [to be courteous, agreeable, and good mannered in our conversation and in dealings with others] is not virtue, it is not far removed from it." 39

In the late Middle Ages, the "courtesy book" as these treatises on etiquette were call-
ed, performed a very important service, i.e., "to initiate the young man (and sometimes the lady) into social life, the only conceivable life outside the cloister, a life which was spent in human contacts and conversation, the serious activities as well as the games." This function of the courtesy book was maintained in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when "civility was the practical knowledge which was necessary in order to live in society and which could not be acquired at school." The *cinquecento* produced a great number of courtesy books, ranging from simple brevitiaries for children, in which they were taught etiquette at the same time as they were learning how to read and write, to courtier treatises emphasizing the ideological and moral implications of proper behavior. Toward the second half of the century, these courtier treatises even gave instructions on how to guard oneself from the dangers of a different world. Della Casa's treatise contains characteristics of both types. It is a book of etiquette, since it emphasizes outward behavior, but at the same time it resembles a courtier treatise by virtue of the moral and spiritual assumptions behind the good manners, and by the fact that it is really a breviary for success in life.

The title of the book refers to Galeazzo Florimonte, whose Latin name was Galateus, and who was the inspiration behind the treatise, but the work itself was dedicated to the author's nephew, Annibale, or perhaps Orazio. Of the date of composition of the *Galateo*, we are not completely certain, but there is good evidence to support the period from 1551-55. For instance, Della Casa himself mentions in his treatise that, "Not long ago, there was in Rome a distinguished man named Ubaldo Bandinelli", who had been one of Della Casa's teachers, died on March 7, 1551. Then in the introduction to the first edition of the book, Gemini says that his former master was inspired to write the work at the urging of Galeazzo Florimonte who had previously hoped to compose a similar treatise. Gemini implies that the meeting between the two was in Rome. Della Casa's friendship with the Bishop of Sessa dates at least from 1536, but until March 1544, it seems Florimonte himself still intended to write a book on good manners. On that date, there is a letter from the bishop to one of his friends, mentioning that he intended to add a new idea on proper behavior to his *libro delle inetti*, which was the way Florimonte referred to his treatise on good manners. Perhaps soon after that date, when the nuncio had returned from Venice he must have met Della Casa and suggested that he write the book instead. According to Gemini, Della Casa took some time in making up his mind to follow his friend's advice—a delay which further substantiates the theory that the work was composed somewhere between 1551 and 1555.

The basic theme of the *Galateo* is Della Casa's vision of a world where man is offered a choice between instinct and reason. But "most people drift along without control, following wherever their instincts lead them, and thinking that they are obeying the laws of nature, as though reason were not natural in a man". This is so because "our senses tell us to crave for and enjoy the pleasure we see before us, "whereas they recoil from reason, which seems harsh to them instead of pleasure, which is often harmful; it [reason] offers our own good, which always requires an effort and tastes sour to a spoiled palate." Man is saved from blindly obeying these primitive instincts by reason. "We should still be children in our prime and in ripe old age, and greybeards would behave as aimlessly as babies, were it not that reason grows in us with the years and, once it has grown, turns us almost from animals into men." Reason, however, is not alone in her work of man's recovery, but must be accompanied by "good manners". Nor is reason simply the faculty
of thinking logically, nor yet a static entity, since it "grows with the years" and is powerless unless strengthened by "habit". 52

The impression one could receive from all this is that Della Casa gives an exalted place to good manners, since he associates them with reason in its final victory over instinct. Yet, he is also careful to point out the limits of good manners, when he describes them as a kind of lesser virtue, but nonetheless essential to man's life. Good manners open up avenues of power to the individual, and make him an accepted member of society. 53

The virtue of pleasing people and of being well-mannered in conversation and in dealing with others, cannot be practised without some sacrifice, since we have to adapt our natural tendencies to the wishes of the majority. We need also discrezione, which is the faculty of making the right choice in behavior according to the time and place, and this faculty must be exercised along with a sense of measure or gracefulness, which is "like a light which shines in things which are fit and proper for their purpose because they are well-ordered and arranged both in relation to each other and as a whole." 54

This is the core of Della Casa's thesis. He expresses it in a very lively manner, limiting his philosophical views to small sections. At first, he deals with things which offend the senses. Then, he goes on to an investigation of behaviour which is offensive to the wishes of the majority, which is, in effect, a chapter on conformity. Finally, after examining the need for gracefulness in man's behavior, he ends up with a series of brief sketches on table manners. The whole book is significant, but the most noteworthy sections are the discussions of the ceremonies and conversations.

In conclusion, Della Casa states that the application of good manners involves three factors: acceptance of subordination, since our main goal is to please others; conformity, since we have to adapt to the wishes of the majority; and compromise, since we have to reach an agreement between what we think proper, and what the majority deems correct. These ideals along with a consideration of utility and acceptable social behavior, are constant elements in Della Casa's discussion of good manners.

IV

In the period from 1550-55, Della Casa sadly reviewed his past and became convinced that his life had been a failure. He rationalized his lack of success as having been caused by the fact that instinct had taken over where reason should have guided him. He was also painfully aware that in his upbringing, he had lacked a solid preparation for life. But in spite of the spiritual anguish which these realizations brought to him, Della Casa did not simply withdraw from the world to indulge in self-pity. Rather, he set himself to teaching others how to avoid the same mistakes, 55 through a synthesis of the world which had nurtured him, and the new times. So, while he kept the typical humanist ideas of wisdom, measure, and gracefulness, which find their final statement in the Galateo after having been suggested and outlined in his previous works, he also managed to come to terms with the new world. It is this realistic attitude which turned Della Casa's short treatise on good manners into an important book.

The Galateo represents the end of a cycle in humanist thought. The theme of fortune was one of the most serious intellectual, social, and emotional problems of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At one point, Alberti saw man as commanding the environment, but his confident view of human power was shattered by the invading French and Spanish armies at the end of the century, so that, by Machiavelli's time, something had changed.
Fortune had become an unpredictable element which man could not master at will. He could, however, use his virtù as a kind of safeguard against the whims of fortune. But if, in 1512, Machiavelli could still believe that a prince might again bring political freedom to the Italian states, this was no longer the case by the 1530's, for by then, the Italian world found itself in utter ruin. The tragedy of this situation was mirrored in the alienation of that strange Roman world of half poets, half buffoons, and alienated people surrounding Luigi Berni in Rome in the 1520's and 1530's, and in Guicciardini, who, after first claiming that prudenza could be a check on fortune, finally concluded that nothing was powerful enough to stand in its way. As a result, angry young men who followed Guicciardini, such as Anton Francesco Doni, Niccolò Franco, and Ortensio Lando, sought refuge from the confusion of such a world, in a utopian society of their own creation. Delia Casa marks the end of this cycle. Fortune is still "blind, vain, superficial, and unpredictable," and man still has found no way of controlling it. Strangely enough, however, this realization did not lead Delia Casa to the negativism of the world of the Berneschi, or of the Guicciardini at the end of his life. On the contrary, since man had no power over fortune, Delia Casa says, he should not despair but act as though fortune did not exist. Moreover, he can at times exercise his own personal influence over a particular situation by discrezione, that is, the ability to make the right choice, and secondly, by pleasing others, thereby making the environment less hostile.

Delia Casa's interpretation of the relationship between fortune and the world indicates not only a change in intellectual thought, but a change in the environment as well. Politically, the period of sudden and violent change in Italy had been followed by one of relative calm, so that, from 1527 on, war no longer reigned in the Peninsula. And dating from the Congress of Bologna (1530), much of Italy came under the rule of one man—Charles V. In spite of Duke Alessandro's murder in Florence and Pier Luigi Farnese's assassination in Piacenza, no territorial state had undergone any meaningful political change since the first two decades of the century. Consequently, by the 1540's and 1550's, the world was slowly becoming more stable for men interested in personal peace as opposed to political freedom, although a feeling of insecurity had not been completely effaced. Delia Casa's treatise expresses not only the relative political peace of the Peninsula, but also the tendency toward increased confidence among the people.

The world outside remained tough and dangerous, and had become increasingly the private domain of a closed caste. Yet, success was now out of the hands of blind forces and, given assets such as education, good manners, money, and blood, one could by personal initiative open the way. Naturally, Delia Casa's man does not share the same absolute confidence that it is evident in Alberti. For Delia Casa, success rests on the degree to which man will be accepted by society at large, more than on his personal ability. This is why Alberti's man asserts his personality with arrogant pride, while Delia Casa's man must efface himself in a world where social polarization, subordination, and conformity are key words.

The author's acceptance of the principles of subordination and conformity are clearly visible. One must adapt his manners, not according to his feelings, but according to the feelings of the people who are with him. Everyone should dress according to his age and his social position. His failure to do so will be taken as a sign of contempt for other people. "A man's worth must be appraised generously, as a miller weighs grain, not by the pennyweight on the goldsmith's scales. He should be accepted as we accept a coin,
not for its intrinsic worth, but at its face-value." There are ceremonies which we must perform because they are required by "rule."62

Della Casa does, however, place a limit on subordination and conformity. One should follow "discreetly" accepted customs; that is, one is obliged to accept the ceremonies adopted by society, but with "discretion." He should never go beyond the limits of justice and honesty in his attempt to please others. For instance, to tell a lie for one's own advantage is "deceitful, sinful, and dishonest."63 Yet, Della Casa's limit is fragile, since subordination and conformity have an inborn tendency to compromise. And compromise in the second half of the sixteenth century often meant a tendency to repress the political, intellectual, and social freedom of the individual.64

While there can be no doubt about Della Casa's acceptance of the principles of subordination and conformity, in appearance at least, he maintained an ambiguous attitude toward the idea of social polarization. He rejected altogether the most obvious features of a rigid social structure, while he accepted a class approach to the concept of society. In De officiis, he had suggested a certain flexibility in the social scale,65 and at different stages in his life, he displayed an open dislike for some of the principles dear to the theoreticians of nobility. He spoke against the duel;66 he poked fun at the ceremonies so dear to the aristocracy;67 he criticized the bad taste of many noblemen who flaunted their wealth or their blood.68 Yet the Galateo is not the "last Italian democratic treatise."69 Rather, it is a complete breviary for the governing elite and a measure of differentiation between this same governing elite and the masses.70

The rules and the way of life described in the treatise are typical of the aristocracy in the cinquecento, not of the middle class. For instance, Della Casa's young man belongs to a "noble and distinguished family." He is a "gentleman" and must learn to speak as "well-bred persons do." He has "servants" around him, and he and the other members of his class spend their time, among other things, feasting, riding, playing, and enjoying themselves (mangiare, cavalcare, giuca re et sollazzare) as aristocrats do. Moreover, Della Casa makes it clear that his teachings are not for "the middle and lower classes of society."71 Also, the translators and readers of the treatise in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw no democratic values in the Galateo. De Becerra, for one, wrote in his preface to the Spanish version of the book that the purpose of his translation was to popularize the work among the people of his "nation (nación)" which, "being singularly familiar with honor so is particularly fond of every civility and serious and civil manners, especially among the people of noble caste."72 Another, Guillaume Colletet, the author of the second French translation of De officiis after the Paris edition of 1571, maintained that the Galateo "should be the inseparable breviary of the courtiers and the eternal guide of a polished gentleman."73 The Jesuit tutor of the son of the Grand Condé wrote to the boy's father in the second half of the seventeenth century that the child "quotes Cato and Latin maxims, and since reading Galatée, he notices all offences against the properties which are committed."74 And when a Piedmontese nobleman sent his daughter to the court of Savoy, he advised her to read Castiglione's Courtier, Della Casa's Galateo, and Stefano Guazzo's Civile Conversazione.75

Class emphasis in the Galateo involves, on the one hand, the distinction between an aristocratic way of life and that of the middle class, and on the other hand, at a more important level, the differentiation between an elite, which, according to the times, could be either aristocratic or bourgeois, and the masses. For instance, at the end of the eigh-
teenth century, a Neapolitan noblewoman urged a relative to read the treatise because the author, Della Casa, was an aristocrat and the norms contained in the book were particularly suited to a nobleman. But when, in the twentieth century, the aristocracy as a power disappeared in Italy, the *Galateo* became a favorite textbook of the young sons of the middle class, which monopolized the school desks of Italian high schools until the end of the Second World War. This class use of the book is even more evident if we analyze the precepts which the work presents to the readers.

Do not offer the food from your plate to anyone else; do not look at your handkerchief after blowing your nose as though pearls and rubies had dropped from your skull; control your yawning in front of other people, and if you yawn, do not howl or Bray like asses; do not scratch yourself or spit when seated at a table—all these are patterns of behavior which today are simply a matter of common sense to working class as much as the professional. But in the sixteenth century, this was not so. Forks were known by only a very few; guests served themselves from the same dish at table; women picked lice from their hair and thought nothing of killing them in the presence of other people. The *Galateo* then signalled a real step forward in the area of good manners. However, by establishing rules on how to dress, how to eat, how and what to say in conversation, Della Casa helped to reinforce the barriers between the elite and the masses. He projected the vision of a world in which there would be no meeting between those who followed the rules of the *Galateo*, and those who did not, since the latter would be excluded from society. The *Galateo* was thus the logical conclusion of a kind of literature addressed to the elite and written in defense of the elite’s privileges, type of life, and behavior.

The conflict between the values of Humanism and those of the Counter Reformation, characteristic of Della Casa’s thought and life, then, finds a conclusion in the *Galateo*. From the former, Della Casa still holds on to the ideas of moderation, gracefulness, and the power of reason over instinct. From the new world, he accepts the principles of subordination, conformity, and a more rigid approach to the relations among social groups. But the end product is not a perfect blend of the two worlds, since the scales weigh heavily in favor of the Counter Reformation.

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**Notes**

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On the democratic quality of the *Galateo*, check G. Toffanin, *Il cinquecento* (Milan, 1965; 7th ed.), p. 253; W. Raleigh, ed. *The Book of the Courtier from the Italian of Count Baldassare Castiglione Done into English by Sir Thomas Hardy Anno 1561* (London, 1900), pp. LXIII, LXIV (the *Galateo* “is the very Sancho Panza to Castiglione’s Don Quixote” and the *Courtier* “is to the *Galateo* what a theory of jurisprudence is to a record of a police-court magistrate”). This interpretation is standard in most surveys of the Renaissance (for instance, see A.G. Dickens, *The Age of
Annibale was a Renaissance man (for example L. Russo, “Giovanni Della Casa, Belfagor, XIII, 1963, 398-399). However, recently there has been a tendency toward a reassessment of Della Casa’s position in regard to the historical period. On this, see for instance, E. Cochrane, “Introduction,” ed., The Late Italian Renaissance 1525-1630 (New York, 1970), p. 17.

2 Annibale Rucellai to Pier Vettori, January 29, 1559, Bologna, British Museum, London (hereafter BML), Add. 10272, f. 12v. Also in Annibale’s letter of December 2, 1559, from Rome always to Vettori, he maintains that “fu errore” to print Della Casa’s Italian works (BML, ibid. 10272, f. 14v).

3 Annibale to Vettori, September 6, 1561, Venice, BML, ibid. 10272, fs. 18v-19r.

4 “Il Galateo fu fatto solo per scherzo et per vedere come la nostra lingua tollerava quello stile così umile e dimesso, e so che non era stimato dal compositore per cosa di momento alcuno.” To Vettori, January 29, 1559, Bologna, BML, ibid. 10272, f. 12v.

5 “Ho ricevuto le cose vulgari di Monsignor suo buona memoria, le quali V.S. mi ha mandate per Piero da Gaggiolo, laudando la sua risoluzione d’haver fatto loro l’honor che meritano et, perché le ho vedute molto volentieri, la prego a mandarmi le latine, che me ne farà grandissimo piacere.” This letter, dated November 11, 1558 is quoted by R. Ancel, “La secrétairie pontificale sous Paul IV,” Revue des questions historiques, N.S., XXXV (1906), 440. It was probably written by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese to Annibale or Gemini. The title of the work which contained the first edition of the Galateo was Rime et prose di Giovanni della Casa Con le Concessioni & Privilegij di tutti i Prencipi, Imprese in Vin TAG, per Nicoletio Bevilacqua, Nel mese d’ottobre MDLVIII.

6 Annibale to Vettori, January 29, 1559, Rome, BML, Add. 10272, f. 13r.

7 Unless otherwise specified, the information on the number of editions of the Galateo is based on a bibliography of Della Casa’s printed works and of the paraphrases of the Galateo in A. Santusosso, “Life and Thought of Giovanni Della Casa, 1503-1556,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1972), pp. 432-516.


9 Della Casa was like a “star (stella)” among the books not originally written in Latin. So in the introduction to the readers in Nathan Chytraeus’ translation of the Galateo. I have used the 1630 Oxford edition, but the book was first published in 1580.

10 This is evident from Chytraeus’ introduction to the footnotes (pp. 143-47) of his Latin version. The introduction is dated January 5, 1597, Bremen.


14 “Para notar una mala costumbre o criança se suelde dezir como proverbio: ‘no manda esso el Galateo’.” Morreale, ed., Dantisco, Galateo espanol, p. 2.


21 Della Casa to Marcello Cervini, August 11, 1548, Venice, Archivio di Stato, Firenze, Carte Cerviniane, 43, document 73.


23 This is evident in his treatise An uxor sit ducenda, which he finished by March 5, 1537.


27 To Cervini, August 11, 1548, Venice, Archivio di Stato, Carte Cerviniane, 43, document 73.


32 To Annibale, April 13, 1549, Venice, ibid., vol. V, pp. 156-57.


37 Many people have written on the Galateo, but, except for a few works, most of them have contributed very little to the knowledge of either the author or his treatise. Of the more noteworthy, see A. Chiarini, "Rileggendo il Galateo," Indagini e letture (Bari, 1946), pp. 119-38; P. Pancrazzi's introduction to the Galateo (Florence, 1940); Santoro, "La discrezione nel Galateo," pp. 228-252; D. Felcini, L'educazione nel Galateo di mons. Della Casa e nel De liberis di I. Sadoletto (Ancona, 1912); Morreale's introduction to Dantisco, Galateo español, pp. 1-63; Santosoosu, "Life and Thought of Giovanni Della Casa, 1503-1556," pp. 307-331; B. Maier's introduction to the Galateo (Milan, 1971), pp. 5-23; and R. Scrivano's review of Maier's edition, La Rassegna della letteratura italiana, LXXVI (1972), 132-133. Important observations are contained in G.F. Chiodaroli and G. Barbarisi, "Giovanni Della Casa," Letteratura italiana. I minori, vol. II (Milan, 1961), pp. 1211-1216; Carletti, "Giovanni Della Casa, uomo pubblico e scrittore", pp. 73-75; R. Romano, "Intorno a talune opere di Monsignor Giovanni Della Casa," Tra due

Galateo or the Book of Manners, tr. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1958), pp. 21, 23. All my quotations from the Galateo are taken from this edition.

P. 21.

Aries, Centuries of Childhood, p. 383.

Ibid., p. 381.


On the influence of Florimonte on the Galateo, see S. D’Onofrio, Il Galateo di monsignor Della Casa e il Libro delle inezie di Galeazzo Florimonte (Naples, 1938), especially pp. 97-136, 139-43. D’Onofrio concludes (pp. 139-41), that although Della Casa borrowed his topic from Florimonte, he was able to write his treatise with great originality. See also G. Biadego, “Galeazzo Florimonte e il Galateo di Monsignor Della Casa,” Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, LX (1900-1901), 529-57; G. Tommasino, Tra umanisti e filosofi: Una nobile figura sessana di letterato e di uomo attraverso l’epoca del pieno rinascimento: Phileates (Maddaloni, 1921); V. Grela, Galeazzo Florimonte letterato del cinquecento (S. Maria Capua Vetere, 1909).

The theory that Della Casa dedicated his treatise to Annibale is based on the mention contained in an anecdote of a “good man who lived near San Pancrazio, not far from your home” (Galateo, p. 41). San Pancrazio was the Florentine district where the Rucellai lived. Yet, Annibale must have already been in his twenties in 1550. So it seems more likely that the young man who is “now at the start of life’s journey” (p. 21) could have been Orazio, Annibale’s younger brother.

This is the opinion of D’Onofrio (Il Galateo di Monsignor Della Casa e il Libro delle inezie, p. 46) who thinks that Della Casa was working on the treatise by the spring of 1552. G. Piquè, Il “Galateo” di monsignor Della Casa (Pisa, 1896), pp. 1-28, chooses the period 1551-52. Campana, “Monsignor Giovanni Della Casa e i suoi tempi,” XVII, 559, is not very clear on what he really thinks, but seems to choose the end of 1550 as a starting date for the composition. Instead, Z. Retali, Il Galateo di Giovanni Della Casa. Saggio critico (Genoa, 1895), pp. 17-18, advances the theory that the work was written between 1544 and 1550, perhaps after 1546, but his argument is very superficial.

P. 35.

Introduction to the 1558 edition of Della Casa’s works, n.n.


See Biadego, “Galeazzo Florimonte e il Galateo di Monsignor Della Casa,” especially 539, 540, 546.

Introduction to the 1558 edition of Della Casa’s works, n.n.


Pp. 88, 89. Pine-Coffin makes an error in his translation of “Non è . . . vero che incontro alla natura non abbia freno, né maestro; anzi ve ne ha due, che l’uno è il costume, e l’altro è la ragione: ma . . . ella [la ragione] non può di scostumato far costumato senza l’usanza, la quale è quasi parte, e portato del tempo.” (Galateo, Napoli, vol. V, p. 324). The English translator mistakes the “ella” for “costume” and translates the last part of the sentence (p. 89), “bad manners cannot be changed into good by reason alone. Good manners must also come from habit, and habit is the child of time.”

P. 23.


58 Ibid., p. 241.

59 The need to please the others is a constant theme in the Galateo, but see also in this regard De officiis, Napoli, vol. VI, p. 41.


61 This is clear not only in the Galateo but also in De officiis (Napoli, vol. VI, pp. 38, 40-41, 42, 46).

62 Galateo, pp. 23, 33, 36, 52.

63 Pp. 33, 50.


65 In his analysis of the relationship between master and servant (Napoli, vol. VI, pp. 37-38), Della Casa allows for an upward movement of the lower friend, so that subordinates can sometimes reach a status higher than their former patron, which might mean that the author did not believe in rigid social barriers.

66 To the Bishop of Cortona (Napoli, vol. V, p. 128), he wrote that he could not judge the worth of the arguments presented by B. Varchi in his treatise on the duel, since “non ho pur mai guardato a questa maledizione del Duello.”

67 Galateo, p. 48.

68 Ibid., p. 24.

69 So Toffanin, Il cinquecento, p. 253.


71 Pp. 21, 56, 98, 81, 35, 36, 45. The Italian text is from Napoli, vol. IV.

72 “. . . assi come es singularmente amiga de honra, assì lo es señaladamente de toda criança y de graves y civiles costumbres, en especial la gente de noble casta.” Quoted in Morreale’s introduction to Dantisco, Galateo español, p. 4. See also by the same author, “El Galateo de Giovanni Della Casa Traducido por Domingo de Becerra,” Nueva revista de filologia hispanica, XV (1961), 247-254.


76 The noblewoman was the Neapolitan, Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel, writing to her cousin in 1776. She was decapitated in Naples in 1799 during the reactionary period which followed the defeat of the Parthenopean Republic: Romano, “Intorno a talune opere di Monsignor Giovanni Della Casa,” pp. 179-80.

77 Ibid., p. 180.

78 Galateo, pp. 25, 26, 98.


80 Cf. Romano, pp. 169-70.