
IN MEMORIAM: LOUIS XI (1423-1483)

PHILOSOPHER KING OF FRANCE

by Pierre Beaudry, July 3, 2023

INTRODUCTION

July 3, the day before Americans celebrate the birth of the American Republic, should be remembered worldwide as the day which lives in the simultaneity of temporal eternity as the birthday of King Louis XI (1423-1483) of France. The memory of that event should also be made to coincide with a similar moment of temporal eternity when the principle of the “consent of the governed” was founded by the great scientist, historian, and Christian humanist, contemporary of Louis XI, Cardinal Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464). This governing principle was defined by Cusa as follows:

“All legitimate authority arises from elective concordance and free submission. There is in the people a divine seed by virtue of their common equal birth and the equal natural rights of all men so that all authority--which comes from God as does man himself--is recognized as divine when it arises from the common consent of the subjects. One who is established in authority as representative of the will of all may be called a public or common person, the father of all, ruling without haughtiness or pride, in a lawful and legitimately established government.

While recognizing himself as the creature, as it were, of all his subjects as a collectivity, let him act as their father as individuals. This is that divinely ordained marital state of spiritual union based on a lasting

harmony by which a commonwealth is best guided in the fullness of peace toward the goal of eternal bliss."¹

LOUIS XI: PHILOSOPHER KING



Figure 1. Louis XI (1423-1483) Philosopher King

Louis, son of King Charles VII of France, was born 600 years ago today in Bourges on July 3, 1423 during the Hundred Years War after the English had invaded a great part of Northern France, including the capital city of Paris.

At the age of six, in 1429, Louis met Jeanne d'Arc for the first time in Loches, after she had won her first victory against the English at the Siege of Orleans. Louis was impressed by the courage of this ordinary girl and she became for him a model of the reform that he implemented to transform his own Kingdom into the first modern Nation-State.

Louis was taught Latin, history, and mathematics by members of the Brotherhood of the Common life, in the spirit of the great Christian humanist, Jean

¹Quoted by Helga Zepp-LaRouche in [Honoring Nicholas of Cusa: A Dialogue of Cultures](#), EIR, Vol. 28, No. 26, July 6, 2001, p. 36. This speech was delivered at a conference of the Schiller Institute in Bad Schwalbach, Germany on May 6, 2001, as a contribution to the 600th birthday of Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa.

Gerson (1363-1429)² who had been chancellor of the University of Paris, head theologian of the Brotherhood of the Common Life, and one of the prominent theologians to attend the Council of Constance (1414-1418) which ended the Western Schism.

Gerson wrote the only authoritative defense of Jeanne d'Arc in that period and came to the defense of the Brotherhood of the Common Life when their monks were charged with heresy for preaching the "perfectibility" of ordinary people.

Louis was instructed at a very early age with the principles of the best Platonic tradition of the Brotherhood of the Common life and he learned very early on that the concept of "perfectibility" of ordinary people posed a direct threat to the feudal oligarchy.

LOUIS XI IN DEFENSE OF THE WALDENSIANS (VAUDOIS)

At the age of 16, Louis entered into an open conflict with his father over the issue of the privileges of the feudal aristocracy. He joined the Praguerie³ revolt of the nobility against his father Charles VII in 1440, and thus had the opportunity to establish a network of military leaders who not only swore allegiance to him, but who understood Cusa's principle of the "consent of the governed" which Jeanne d'Arc had reflected in her mission to save France, which Louis later established as the principle of government. The same principle of justice applies, and should apply, to the President of the United States today. Here is how Louis XI expressed his governing principle in the essay he wrote for his son:

On Justice

"When Justice reigns in a Kingdom, the common good is well guarded, and so is the particular: for Justice is that virtue which defends human

² Jean Gerson is considered by some French historians as being the true author of *The Imitation of Christ*.

³ The Praguerie was a revolt organized in February of 1440 by some of the key leaders of King Charles VII's military command who attempted to depose him and put his son the Dauphin Louis on the throne of France. See also some fragmentary truths in Lydwine Scordia, [LA PRAGUERIE RACONTÉE PAR LOUIS XI AU DAUPHIN CHARLES DANS LE "ROSIER DES GUERRES" : UNE LEÇON POLITIQUE on JSTOR](#), *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*, Publisher: Editions de Boccard, 2015, pp. 95-127 (33 pages).

company and community of life, such that each may well use common things as common; and the particular as particular.

“He who wishes to follow Justice, must love and fear God, so that he may be loved by Him; but one cannot love Him better than to do good to each man and evil to none, and then the people will acclaim him just and follow him, and revere and love him.”⁴



Figure 2. Boundary limits of France (red) after Louis XI's victory at the Battle of Nancy, 1477.

⁴ *Le Rosier des Guerres, enseignements de Louis XI Roy de France Pour le Dauphin son fils*, Typographie FRANCOIS BERNOUARD, Paris, 1925, p. 12.

During his twenty two year reign (1461-1483) Louis XI's overriding and persistent diplomatic and strategic purpose was to break up the feudal oligarchy and to unify the great principalities and duchies of France under the Charlemagne principle⁵ of the general welfare of the people. During this short period of twenty two years, Louis XI succeeded in unifying his new kingdom of France by bringing together the duchy of Anjou (1474), the duchy of Brittany (1475), the duchy of Burgundy (1477, later confirmed by Maximilian of Habsburg), then later, the regions of Maine, Provence, Forcalquier, and Armagnac (1481).

Louis XI's policy to reinforce the central authority of a Commonwealth of the people over the decentralized feudalist principle of oligarchism began to inspire ordinary people in the wake of Jeanne d'Arc's victory over the English. Louis XI had the same purpose in his defense of the "self-perfectibility" of the Waldensian (Vaudois) peasants of Valpute against the feudal Episcopal and Parliamentary inquisition of the Dauphiné:

« The Vallouise (Valpute) valley was thus renamed in his [Louis XI] honor. Fallen into disgrace, the bishop of Lisieux, Thomas Basin, created the posthumous black legend whereby King Louis XI was an 'ugly tyrant, deceitful and cruel, locking his enemies in iron cages,' describing him in his *History of Louis XI* as 'a notorious rascal known from here to hell as an abominable tyrant of the beautiful people.' The national propaganda concocted by the historians of the 19th century turned him into a 'demonic genius,' the 'Universal Spider,' one of the fathers of French centralization.»⁶

French historians have maintained the legend created by Thomas Basin whereby the most benevolent, wise, and loving King of France was made to be the most deceitful and cruel tyrant that France had ever known. The time has now

⁵ [CHARLEMAGNE AND THE DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS](#)

⁶ [Louis XI — Wikipédia \(wikipedia.org\)](#). See also: [Les Vaudois: Reflections on a Religious Massacre in Provence – France Revisited - Life in Paris, Travel in France](#). Elizabeth Estris wrote about the Waldensians: "Persecuted for centuries in both France and Italy, the Waldensians—les Vaudois—were a sect founded in the 12th century by Pierre Valdès (or Valdo), a Catholic merchant from Lyon who relinquished his property and riches to preach an ideal life of devotion to Biblical teachings of poverty, simplicity, and non-violence."

come for France to restore the true character of Louis XI after 600 years of slanderous deceptions and lies.

THE FIGHT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF GENERAL WELFARE

In his book [L'INQUISITION EN DAUPHINÉ](#), French archivist and paleographer, Jean Marx, wrote cautiously, but truthfully, about Louis XI. He said: “We will not separate the polemical texts from the strictly historical texts, because on this subject, history has been written extensively and for too long as an apology for only one of the two opposing parties.”⁷ Marx doesn't take sides with any of the two and lets the reader discover that the two were King Louis XI and the Archbishop of Embrun, Jean Baile. Marx wrote:

“Louis XI strongly reacted against the inquisition. During his stay in Dauphiné, Louis XI developed a very strong grudge against Jean Baile, Archbishop of Embrun, fierce persecutor of the Waldensian people. Upon becoming King, Louis showed hostility against the inquisitors and against Jean Baile in particular. On July 1, 1475, [Pope] Sixtus IV urged the King of France to suppress the assemblies and conspiracies of heretics in the diocese of Embrun. However, on May 18, 1478, Louis XI addressed a letter to the governor of the Dauphiné, protesting strongly against ‘all the religious monks calling themselves inquisitors and other things’ who had committed unjust extortions and odious abuses against the peasants of Vallousie, Freissinière, and Argentière.”⁸

Louis XI's battle against the Inquisitors of the Waldensians in the Dauphiné, which had been going off and on for two centuries, became emblematic of the conflict between Louis XI and the feudal oligarchy of France. Louis XI defended the right of the population to choose their own beliefs against the abuses of an Ultramontane clergy which had taken over the Catholic Church of Rome and of France, which used all of its spiritual and financial powers to maintain control over both the physical and spiritual condition of mankind. Thus, the inquisition against

⁷ Jean Marx, [L'inquisition en Dauphiné : étude sur le développement et la répression de l'hérésie et de la sorcellerie du XIVe siècle au début du règne de François Ier](#), Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, Paris, 1914, p. iv.

⁸ Jean Marx, Op. Cit., p. 76. (Translation by Pierre Beaudry)

the Waldensians of the Dauphiné region of France, especially those of the Vallousie, Freyssinière, and Argentière, had a political agenda and was used to attempt to stop Louis XI's project for the creation of a Nation-State based on the common good.

From 1475 until his death in 1483, Louis XI was unable to secure the freedom of the Waldensians. After the King died, the same Archbishop Jean Baile executed his grand design of eliminating that population of the Dauphiné with no opposition. The defense of the Waldensians was taken out of the hands of the King's Great Council and put into the hands of the Parliament of Grenoble and of the Dauphiné region packed with anti-Waldensian supporters. Without the support of Louis XI, the Waldensians had no chance to survive, in spite of appeals by the Freyssinière people. Paleographer Marx reported:

“On February 5, 1487, Pierre Roux, notary, and Etienne Roux both from Freyssinière, stood at the bottom of the steps leading to the main gate of the Embrun Cathedral in the presence of Archbishop [Jean Baile] and the Governor of Dauphiné. Pierre Roux held an appeal in his hand which he handed over to the Archbishop. In this appeal, it was stated that the inhabitants of the valleys had resisted strongly against the accusation of which they were the object: the Archbishop acted in defiance of their rights in order to take revenge on the past, to increase his exactions, and to strip the subjects of the Dauphin [Louis XI's son, the future Charles VIII] who were simple peasants believing humbly the teachings of people who are wiser than they are in matters of faith. The Archbishop and his officers looted the people like mercenaries and rapacious wolves. The inhabitants of the valleys made this appeal both temporally and spiritually against those who attacked them, and scattered the herd of the faithful. As a result of the oppressions from the Archbishop, prince of Embrun, and from the other lords of the

baronies who were allied with him taking part in the looting, the people of Freyssinière had to either abandon their homes or fight for their rights.”⁹

The appeal was ignored by the ecclesiastic and parliamentary authorities because the Waldensians were already considered guilty as charged. The Waldensians complained to the Vatican, but Pope Innocent VIII made no effort to respond to their appeal. The Waldensians preached apostolic austerity and poverty as the way to perfect mankind, the very principle that the Brotherhood of the Common Life had espoused. In 1215, Pope Innocent III declared the Waldensians as heretics. On August 5, 1487, four years after the death of Louis XI, the Waldensians were subjected to an Inquisition Crusade ordered by Pope Innocent VIII. This last inquisition was led by Alberto Cattaneo.

The Waldensians of Vallousie, Freyssinière, and Argentière were excommunicated on March 8, 1488. A six year inquisition was run by the Archbishop of Embrun and the Parliament of the Dauphiné. Six years later, in 1494, the Waldensian delegates succeeded in having the King's Grand Counselor, Adam Fumée, arrest Archbishop Jean Baile of Embrun in Lyon and fully rehabilitated the Waldensians. However, this only actually took place with the crowning of Louis XII, in 1498, when the Waldensians of the Dauphiné were rehabilitated. Marx reported: “...on April 5, 1501, the Cardinal of Amboise was empowered to absolve all of the heretics, laymen and ecclesiastics, accused by ordinary judges or delegates and by inquisitors, provided they returned to the Catholic faith and humbly asked to be absolved of their previous errors.”¹⁰

During his 22 years of reign, Louis XI's strategy was to win over the French cities that had been taken over by England, one after the other, to the idea of

⁹ Jean Marx, *Op. Cit.*, p. 152. Note that Jean Marx gave an interpretation of what was written, and not the text of the original document. He merely added that the “protest was received very badly.” The original document can be gotten at the Bibliotheque Nationale de France (BNF), ms. Lat. 3375, fol. 602.

¹⁰ Jean Marx, *Op. Cit.*, p. 181. The remaining scattered Waldensians who survived the holocaust were later absorbed into the Calvinist Protestant movement during the sixteenth century. The main denomination became known as the Waldensian Evangelical Church and merged with the Methodist Evangelical Church in 1975 to form the Union of Methodist and Waldensian Churches.

developing cultural centers, building manufactures, and establishing trade fairs in order to attract international exchanges and trade partners, and opening France to the rest of the world. His crucial reform in education was the creation of new humanist schools under the King's personal authority. In 1464, he created two new universities, one in Valence and the other in Bourges; then, in 1470, he created a printing press at the Sorbonne University in Paris with the collaboration of German printers, Martin Krantz, Ulrich Gering, and Michel Friburger. In 1515, the Sorbonne press published the first edition in Europe of Nicholas of Cusa's works. Soon after, France had major printing houses in 37 cities.

LOUIS XI AND THE TRUTH OF TEMPORAL ETERNITY

The deprecation of Louis XI by French historians is not a matter of personal opinion; it is a universal axiomatic question. *Odium theologicum* is an axiom busting term expressing a mental state of fear and hatred among those who rejected the paradigm shift of the Renaissance that Louis XI and Cusa were leading, because it produced a true axiomatic change in the minds of ordinary people. This was anathema for the feudal and ecclesiastical aristocracy. Such anathema also came from the "Sacred Inquisition" because the very nature of their controlling power was put into question by ordinary people inside of the Church itself. The matter of *odium theologicum* was so universally significant for the control of Christian public opinion that Church leaders were willing to go for complete dictatorship in order to maintain their power.

The term "axiom busting" used in modern times is less elitist than "*odium theologicum*," but it has the same meaning and the same political significance, which is to express the axiomatic moment of a "paradigm shift" inside of the human mind; that is, a moment when all of the underlying assumptions of a believer are turned upside down because they have been demonstrated to be false from the vantage point of a higher conception of the truth emerging in society. That moment of temporal eternity is so special that the matter of truth itself was at stake.

Such a *paradigm shift* does not merely supersede a previously wrong view of the world by changing the way everybody thinks; it becomes incommensurable

with the way the universe used to be understood before it was changed. When a new *paradigm shift* is accepted by universal reason, the previous world view becomes classified as a falsification of the truth, just as the geocentric view of the world was destroyed in feudal times. If the opposite occurs and the new *paradigm shift* is rejected or falsified by the ruling powers that refuse to make the change, the result is a mental suicide on the part of the ruling oligarchy.

The question of temporal eternity resides, therefore, in the fact that *odium theologicum* was used by corrupt religious leaders as a pretext to take control over the population. Louis XI's purpose was to unify the kingdom of France under the same principles of the modern nation-state.

Louis XI was proud of having done better than his father, Charles VII, because he had succeeded in driving the English out of France by military force, while his father had merely driven them out “by force of pâté, venison, and good French wine.”¹¹

It was after defeating Charles the Rash at the Battle of Nancy on January 5, 1477 that Louis XI succeeded in unifying France as a nation-state. The event not only put an end to the Lotharingian-Burgundian-English wars but marked the beginnings of sovereign nation-states in Europe. Louis XI succeeded in destroying the “visible” feudal system that had plagued France under the Lotharingian regime that Venice had created by imposing its geopolitical “divide and conquer” tactic against the three grandsons of Charlemagne since the Treaty of Verdun in 843.

Here, the truth of temporal eternity lies in the realization that Louis XI knew that his creation of the French Commonwealth was never going to die, because it contained within itself the germ that was to later create something like the American Republic. He knew that ahead of time, because, once you have internalized properly this true notion of temporal eternity, inside of your own mind, your soul becomes fearless in the timeless fight for the truth, because the intention is for the immortal benefit of humanity as a whole and not just for yourself or for your country or your time; it is for all time.

¹¹ [Louis XI - Wikipedia](#).

Louis XI incarnated the true ideal of Plato's philosopher king by favoring the common people over the privileged aristocracy. His greatest achievements in history was his belief that *agape* is the fundamental principle underlying the increase in Potential Relative Population-Density.

Louis XI's reign was "the first time in history that a policy of demographic growth had been consciously implemented for the establishment of the nation-state."¹² It was in that sense that Louis XI represented the beginning of the establishment of the Platonic idea of a Constitutional Republic of the people, for the people, and by the people.

The truth of such a temporal eternity moment between today and 600 years ago is such that the demonstration of the truth of the more ancient case can serve as a reasonable proof of existence for the truth of the more recent one.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY KING LOUIS!

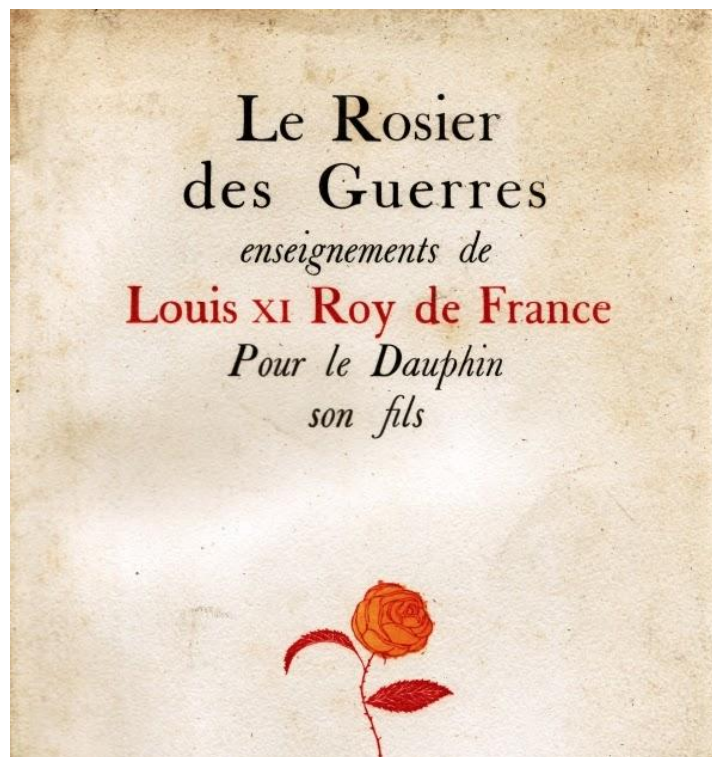


Figure 3. Le Rosier des Guerres

¹² [Louis XI's founding of the French nation](#), EIR, Vol. 22, No. 17, April 21, 1995, p. 25.

LOUIS XI'S 'ROSEBUSH OF WAR'

THE ROSEBUSH OF WAR is a compilation of about sixty pages of recommendations that Louis XI wrote for his son the Dauphin, near the end of his life in 1483. The following selection is a revised translation of one done by Katherine Notley. [[The Rosebush of War](#)]

First Chapter, Which is Prologue

Regarding the Reasons for This Rosebush

“Because matters which are known and understood by experience are better known, and of them we can better speak the truth, than those which we know only by hearsay, after we have contemplated and brought to memory those things which in our time came to pass in our Kingdom of France, touching on the government, the care and defense of the same, as much including the life and reign of our late father of noble memory, King Charles the Seventh of that name, may God give him absolution, as our own; and after having looked over and counterweighed the events of the times of our predecessor Kings of France, and those coming before and after them, as the Chronicles put it; and desiring that those, who after us will come and rule, especially our very dear and well-loved son, Charles Dauphin of Viennais, so that he might well profit, reign, and triumph in the growth of our said Kingdom; we have wished to have drawn up and assembled in a small volume several good notable teachings aiming at the care, defense, and government of a Kingdom, which we have named the *Rosebush of War*. And because we have found of our own life and knowledge, that nothing has occurred which similarly may not have happened before; and that the recording of the past is quite profitable, as much to console, counsel, and comfort us against adversity as to steer clear of those troubles against which others have stumbled, and so enliven and drive us to do good like the best of men; we have wished to append abridged Chronicles, from the times of our predecessors the first Kings of France up to our own coronation, because it is both a great pleasure as well as a good pastime to recite past events, how and in which manner and in what sort of time they occurred, such as losses and conquests, or subjugations of towns or of the country.

Third Chapter

On the Estate and Duty of Kings and Princes

Considering that the duty, the estate, and the vocation of Kings, princes and their cavalry is to defend the common good, both ecclesiastic and secular, to uphold justice and peace among their subjects, and to do good, they will have good in both this world and the next; and if they do evil only, affliction will come, and it shall come to pass some day that one must leave the world to go and give account of one's undertakings and receive one's reward. And to risk their lives for another, which among all other estates of the world is most to be praised and honored. And because the common good which concerns many, which is the commonweal of the Kingdom, is more praiseworthy than the particular, which often has frustrated the common good, we have freely put into writing the acts of the princes and of their cavaliers, and all good doctrines which serve their estate.

I have seen nothing which so destroyed and annihilated the power of the Romans, as when they betook themselves more to the particular than to the common good.

On Justice

When Justice reigns in a realm, the common good is well guarded, and so is the particular: for Justice is that virtue which defends human company and community of life, such that each may well use common things as common; and the particular as particular.

Who wishes to follow Justice, must love and fear God, so that he may be loved by Him; but one cannot love Him better than to do good to each man and evil to none, and then the people will acclaim him just and follow him, and revere and love him.

Who would be just, it is not enough to not do harm to others, but one must also oppose those who seek to do harm to others:

Thus, a man is just who brings about peace and tranquility.

Of justice, two things appertain: the will to benefit all men, and to do injury to no man.

When evil acts began to multiply in the world dangerously, in order that the evil-doers be punished, men committed their lives to the service of the lords, who were thus instituted to defend right among them.

According to the nature of the people and the countries, the Kings established laws in their lands, through which their lands and Kingdoms were and would be maintained. Thus in this one is a Cavalier, the other a merchant, and another a laborer. And since the profit of one empowers the benefit of another, wars and hatred would arise and be the destruction of men, unless there were Justice, which guards and defends the community of life and of whose power is so great, that evil-doers together wish that justice be withheld from among them.

A King is good and noble, who in his Kingdom removes a bad law, in favor of a good one, and takes care not to break a law which is profitable to the people, for the people will always obey a benefactor.

The greatest and sovereign good, which a King could have in his Kingdom, is the obedience of his subjects, for God requires no more of His creatures.

[...]

We read of King Alexander, who when his father the King was near death had him crowned and made King of his Kingdom and made him sit on the Royal throne, and the Princes and lords were content with that; nonetheless, after the death of his father, to draw to himself the hearts of his men and subjects, he said among other beautiful words: Good lords, I wish to have no seignury over you, but to be as one of you, and, I wish that it please you to accept me. I would love what you love and hate what you hate. I do not wish in any manner to be in opposition to you or your acts. But I, who hate frauds and malice and have always loved you when my father was alive, and still do and will always, counsel and pray you that you fear God and obey Him as sovereign Lord, and elect that one as King, whom you see the most obedient to God; who will best think of the good standing of the people; who will be most easygoing and merciful to the poor, who will protect justice and right among the weak as much as the strong; who most will expose his own body for the commonweal; who for no delectations nor delights will be slow to protect and defend you; who most boldly places himself in danger of death to destroy your

enemies; and who by means of his good works protects you from evil. For such a man must be elected King, and none other.

And when his men had heard his reasoning and recognized his great discretion and subtle understanding, they were greatly surprised and responded to him: We have heard your reasoning and have accepted and accept your counsel, so we supplicate you and wish that you reign and have lordship always over us, and we hold that no other has so well deserved to be our King. And so they elected him seigneur and King, and crowned him, and gave him their blessing, and prayed to God that He keep him. To them he said: I have heard the prayer which you have made for me, and how of good heart you have made me King, so I ask humbly of God, that He confirm His love for me in your spirit, that it be His desire that He not suffer me to do anything but what is profitable to you, and honorable to me.

We read as well of King Solomon, whom the people feared greatly for the great judgments he made. And also several others, whose lives must be as a light for those who come after.

On the Common Good of the Kingdom

The first laws of the princes deal with the common good, which is the commonweal of the Kingdom, and the Cavalry is principally created for the defense of this common good, for the cities as well as for the Kingdom.

At the beginning of the century, when cities and towns were first made, rural life, deprived of men, was shared with the community of dumb and wild beasts.

And cities were, from the first, the name of the common good or the public wealth.

A city is the assembly of people to inhabit one place and to live under one law; and thus, as people and their habitations are diverse, so also are appearances and the laws diverse throughout the world; and accordingly are there diverse lordships to guard the common good, so that the strong do not harm the weak, and each one may have what is his, which he may employ by right and reason.

The government of the Kingdom must from the beginning be firm, and rest upon three pillars.

The first is justice, which must be fixed and established within the heart of the King, who must render to each his right, and lean neither to the right nor to the left.

Solomon said that, “*A just King will never have mishaps.*”

The second pillar is reverence, which the people must have, in the way of the Apostle, who said, “*Honor thy Lord.*” That is the only thing in the world which seeks the merits of faith, and which overcomes all sacrifices.

The third pillar is love, which must be in the one and in the other. For the King must love his subjects with a great heart and a dear faith, and seek day and night the common profit of the kingdom, and of all his subjects; and must they also love their King with a right heart and true intention, and give him counsel and aid in upholding his estate and seignury. It is said, that one is a good cavalier and is loved by God, who loyally loves him who reigns under His authority. [Louis XI, *Le Rosier des Guerres.*]

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