

as he applied himself chiefly to the study of his mother tongue; in which he succeeded so well that he is still esteemed one of the best Tuscan writers, and his authority often quoted by the compilers of the Cruscan Dictionary in their second Edition of that work [d]. He wrote a Comedy upon the ancient Greek model, as Jovius informs us in the following passage: “comiter æstimemus Etruscos sales ad exemplar comœdiæ veteris Aristophanis, in *Nicia* præsertim comœdia; in qua adeo jucunde vel in tristibus risum excitavit, ut illi ipsi, ex persona scite expressa, in scena inducti cives, quanquam præalte commorderentur, totam inustæ notæ injuriam civili lenitate pertulerint: actamque Florentiæ, ex ea miri leporis fama, Leo Pontifex instaurato ludo, ut urbi ea voluptas communicaretur, cum toto scenæ cultu ipsisque histrionibus Romam acciverit [e]. From whence it appears that the great applause with which that piece was acted at Florence coming to the Pope’s ears, he ordered it to be represented at Rome by the same company of Actors, and with the same decorations. Monsieur Varillas (who compares Machiavel’s theatrical talent with that of Moliere) has picked up many other particulars of this story, which are not to be met with in Jovius. He relates them as follows. “One day, as Machiavel was mimicking the gait and manner of some of the Florentines, Cardinal de’ Medici told him they would appear in a much more ridiculous light upon the Stage, if he could introduce them there in a comedy written in the manner of Aristophanes. This was sufficient to put Machiavel upon composing his *Sanitia* [f], in which, those who were the subjects of his ridicule, found such a lively representation of themselves, that they durst not resent it, though they were present at the first exhibition of the piece, for fear of heightening the public laugh by applying it to themselves. Cardinal de’ Medici was so pleased with it, that after he was made Pope, he caused the decorations of the Stage, the dresses, and the Actors themselves, to be brought to Rome for the entertainment of his Court [g]”. Varillas here not only relates circumstances which are not to be found in Jovius; but, contrary to

[d] They quote him under the name of the *Florentine Secretary*, as Machiavel’s Works are condemned in the *Index Expurgatorius*.

[e] Elog. cap. 87.

[f] Jovius calls it *Nicia*, and therefore it should have been printed *Nicia* accordingly. *Nicia* indeed is one of the *Dramatis Personæ* in *Mandragola*, a Comedy written by Machiavel, but there is no entire piece so called, to be found amongst his works. We meet with only two Comedies there; the first of which is entitled *Mandagrola*, and the other *Clitia*. Probably the latter may be meant, as it is a very humorous one.

[g] *Varillas Anecdotes de Florence*, p. 248.