

It is true, I deviate in this from the custom of most authors, who generally dedicate their works to some Prince, and, either out of ambition or avarice, basely extol him to the skies for the practice of every virtue, when perhaps his vices deserve the utmost detestation. But as I was determined to avoid all suspicion of flattery, I have made choice of persons to patronize my works, who, though not Princes in reality, yet highly deserve to be so, for their numberless good qualities; not of such as have it actually in their power to heap riches and honours upon me, but of those that I know would not fail to do it, if they were as able as they were willing. For to judge rightly of things, we certainly ought to shew a greater degree of esteem and regard for those that have it in their will, than for others that only have it in their power to be liberal; and to respect such as are worthy of a sovereignty, more than those that possess one without worth. Thus, Historians who praise Hiero the Syracusan, though but a private man, seem to make little account of Peres the Macedonian, notwithstanding he was a Prince; because Hiero wanted nothing but a crown to make him a King, and Peres had no other qualification to entitle him to that dignity. Vouchsafe then, my dear Friends, to accept this work, (such as it is) since I undertook it at your own request; and if this part shall have the good fortune to meet with your approbation, I will proceed in it, according to my promise. Farewell.