

Abstract

The aim of this work is to study the development of meaning of two concepts *virtù* and *fortuna* in Italian literature of 16th century and confront both concepts with the reality afterwards. The basis for the analysis are following works: political treatise *Il Principe* (The Prince) by Niccolò Machiavelli, moral treatise *Il Cortegiano* (The Courtier) by Baldassare Castiglione and autobiography *La Vita* (The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini) by Benvenuto Cellini. This work is divided into five chapters. The second chapter is a short introduction to the whole work. In the third chapter is presented Niccolò Machiavelli's life and work which are followed by semantic analysis of the concepts *virtù* and *fortuna* in the text of *The Prince*. The fourth chapter is dedicated to Baldassare Castiglione's life, work and short analysis of the transformations that *virtù* and *fortuna* assume in text of *The Courtier*. In the fifth chapter is presented Benvenuto Cellini's life and work. Afterwards the concepts *virtù* and *fortuna* are studied in the context of an example of life and thinking of an actual person. The sixth and last chapter is a recapitulation. It contains confrontation and comparison of the meanings which studied terms assume in all three works and points out differences and similarities.