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Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) was born in Florence and worked as a secretary and ambassador for the Florentine republic. He was suspected of conspiracy, sent to prison and tortured and subsequently retired from public life when the Medici family consolidated their power in 1512. His most famous work, *The Prince*, was written as an attempt to win over the Medici's favour and return to political life.



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NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI / THE PRINCE

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Translated and edited by **Kaan Advan**

Niccolò Machiavelli

The Prince



CHAPTER 1

THE DIFFERENT SORTS OF GOVERNMENT AND THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY ARE FORMED

Every state and power that have held or hold rule over men have been established either as republics or as principalities.

Principalities are either hereditary, in which the ruling families are long established, or new.

The new ones appear as being either entirely new, as was Milan to Francesco Sforza, or they are, as it were, members annexed to the hereditary customs of the prince who acquired them, as was the kingdom of Naples to the King of Spain.

Such dominions acquired thusly are either accustomed to the rule of another prince, or to live freely; and are subjugated either by force, or of others, or else by fortune or by ability.

CHAPTER 2

OF HEREDITARY PRINCIPALITIES

Let us leave out all discussions about republics, having already treated of them at length previously, and will only deal with principalities. As mentioned above, I will discuss how such principalities are to be ruled and preserved.

First and foremost, it is far less difficult to stay in hold of hereditary states, and to those already close with the prince's family, for it is sufficient only not to exceed the customs of his ancestors, and to be careful in dealing with circumstances as they appear, for a prince of average strength to maintain himself in his state, unless he should be deprived of it by some excessive and outside force, and in case he should be deprived of it, whenever anything unconventional happens to the usurper of his throne, he should regain it.

In Italy, for example, the Duke of Ferrara, who could not withstand the attacks of the Venetians in '84, nor those of Pope Julius in '10, unless he had been long established in his dominions. For the hereditary prince usually has less cause and much lesser necessity to offend; hence it happens that he will be more cherished; unless extraordinary vices cause him

to be hated, it is then reasonable to expect that his subjects will naturally feel well disposed towards him; and all through the duration of his rule the urge and motivated for change are gone, for one change always leads to another.

CHAPTER 3

ON MIXED PRINCIPALITIES

Alas, the difficulties start to occur in a new principality. Firstly, it is not entirely new, as it were, such as a member of a state which, as a whole, can be called composite, the changes appear mainly from an inherent difficulty common to all newly established principalities; for men do change their rulers willingly, and hope for a better future, and this feeling of hope leads them to take up arms against their rulers, as they are deceived, for they afterwards learn they have gone from bad to even worse. This leads to the surfacing of a natural and common necessity, which always causes a new prince to burden those who have submitted to him with endless other struggles which he must put upon his newly gained territory.

In that sense, all those whom you have injured in seizing that principality become your new enemies, and you are not able to keep your allies who put you there in the first place because you are aware that you are never be able to satisfy them in the way they expected, and you cannot take drastic measures to repel them, as you are bound to them. For, although one may have a very powerful army, yet in entering a province one has always needs to be on the side of its natives.

For these exact reasons Louis the Twelfth, King of France, was able to swiftly occupy Milan, and as quickly he lost it; and to turn him out the first time it only needed Lodovico's own forces; because those who had paved the way to him, finding themselves tricked in their hopes of future benefit, would not endure for a second the vices of the new prince. It is quite true that, after acquiring rebellious provinces another time, they are not so lightly lost afterwards, for the prince, takes the opportunity of the rebellion to repel the usurpers with no hesitation whatsoever, to clear out the suspects, and to make himself even more powerful. Thusly, causing France to lose Milan the first time it was enough for the Duke Lodovico to raise rebellions on the borders; but to cause him to lose it a second time, the whole world needed to go against him, and that his armies should be defeated and driven out of Italy; which followed from the events mentioned previously.

Still, Milan was taken from France both the first and the second time. The main reasons for the first have been discussed; we shall now see those for the second, and to see what resources he had this time, and what any one in his situation would have had to keep his position more secure in his acquisition than did the King of France.

Now I say that those territories which, when acquired, are added to an older state by the one who acquires them, are either of the same country and language, or they are not. When they are, it is fairly easier to keep hold of them, especially when they have not been relying to self-government; and to hold them securely it is enough to have removed its ruling the family; because the two peoples, preserving in other things the old ways, and not being unlike in tradition, will live peacefully together, as one has seen in Brittany, Burgundy, Gascony, and

Normandy, which have been bound to France for so long a time: and, although there may be some difference in language, nevertheless the traditions are similar, and the people will easily be able to get on with each other. He who has joined them, if he wishes to hold them, has only to keep in mind these two main concerns: the one, that the family of their former prince is gone; the other, that neither their laws nor their taxes are changed in any way, so that in a very short time they will become entirely one indistinguishable body with the previous state.

But when states are gained in a country that has a different language, customs, or laws, hardships arise, and some luck and great energy are needed to keep hold of them, and one of the greatest and most real helps would be that the prince who has acquired them should go and establish his life there. This would make his position more secure and durable, as it has made that of the Turk in Greece, who, notwithstanding all the other measures taken by him for holding that state, if he had not settled there, he would most definitely not have been able to keep it. Because, if one is there as hardships arise, disorders are dealt with as they spring up, and one can quickly remedy them; but if one is not at hand, they are heard of only when they are great, and then one can no longer remedy them. Besides this, the country is not pillaged by your officials; the subjects are satisfied by prompt recourse to the prince; thus, wishing to be good, they have more cause to love him, and wishing to be otherwise, to fear him. He who would attack that state from the outside must have the utmost caution; as long as the prince resides there it can only be wrested from him with the greatest difficulty.

A better course of action would be to send colonies to a couple of locations, which could act as major location points

to that state, as it is required to act thusly or to keep a vast number of cavalry and infantry. A prince does not delve much on colonies, for he can send them and keep them in position whilst offending only a meagre population among citizens from whom he takes lands and houses to give to allocate new residents; and for those whom he offends, they do remain poor and disorganized, such that they are never able to cause any harm; and the rest are easily kept quiet, and at the same time are anxious not to make any mistakes for fear it should happen to them as it has to those who thought otherwise. All in all, maintaining these colonies are not costly, they are more reliable, they do not cause much harm, and the offended few, as has been said, being poor and disorganized, cannot hurt. Yet still, one has to remark that men ought either to be well treated or defeated, because they can avenge themselves of lighter harm, of more serious ones they cannot; therefore, the wrong that is to be done to a man ought to be of such a kind that one does not stand in fear of revenge.

But in maintaining armed men there in place of colonies one spends much more, having to consume on the garrison all the income from the state, so that the acquisition turns into a loss, and many more are exasperated, because the whole state is injured; through the shifting of the garrison up and down all become acquainted with hardship, and all become hostile, and they are enemies who, whilst beaten on their own ground, are yet able to do hurt. For every reason, therefore, such guards are as useless as a colony is useful.

In maintaining armed forces there instead of colonies would be much more costly, and result in having to invest all the income generated by that particular state on the garrison, so that the acquisition quickly turns into an unlucrative venture,

and many more people are left exasperated, for the whole state is harmed, as the change is not made swiftly but by force, and everyone becomes hostile, and the garrison is seen as enemies who, whilst beaten on their own ground, are able to fight back. Therefore, for every reason, such an army would not prove itself as useful as a colony.

Again, the prince who holds a country that has different properties than the points mentioned above ought at all costs to make himself the head and defender of his less powerful neighbours, and to weaken the more powerful amongst them, making sure that no entity become as powerful as himself shall, or that none get a more advantaged position there; for it will always happen that such parties will be put forward by the discontented, either through excess of ambition or through fear, as seen already in countless situations. The Romans were brought into Greece by the Ætolians; and in every other country where they gained an advantage, they were always brought in by the inhabitants. And the usual course of affairs is that, as soon as a powerful foreigner enters a country, all the other subject states get closer to him, deeply motivated by the contempt which they feel against the ruling power. So, in that sense, the prince does not need to feel much trouble to gain them over himself, for the whole of them quickly gather around to the recently acquired state. He only needs to remind himself and make sure that they do not get hold of too much power and too much authority, and then with his own forces, and with their support, he can easily keep the more powerful among them at bay, so as to remain entirely in power in the country. And he who does not properly manage this business will soon lose his gains, and if he does not hold it he will experience endless troubles and mishaps.

In the states they acquired, the Romans always ruled by the following principle; they established colonies, flattered the less powerful without giving them too much power, put down the most powerful and forbade foreign rulers to gain influence in them. Let's take the province of Greece as an example. They made friends with the Achæi and the Ætoli, the influence of the kingdom of Macedonia was withered, and Antiochus was successfully driven out, and they never allow the people of the Achæi or the Ætoli to gain any territorial advances, nor did they allow Philip to exert influence over them induce without lowering him, and while also containing the power of Antiochus and controlling his ambitions to hold any state in that province. For the Romans did in this case what all learned princes should do, being able to look at future dangers and not just only present ones by minutely defending against them; for they can be remedied easily if anticipated in advance, but if one waits till they are closer, the antidote no longer works as the illness has become incurable; such as these bouts hectic fevers spoken of by doctors, which at their beginning are easy to cure but harder to identify, yet if they are not treated and recognised in due course, they in turn become much harder to cure whilst being easier to identify. Matters of state are no different; for knowing in advance (which is what wise men would do) can cure the nested evils much more easily. But when, for want of such knowledge, they are being let to propagate freely so that everyone can recognise them, the remedy is no longer available. Therefore, the Romans, would usually foresaw the looming dangers, and dealt with them at once, and, even to avoid confrontation, they would not let them approaching, for they knew that war should not simply be avoided, but only put off to the advantage of others; moreover they wished to fight with Philip and Antiochus in Greece so as not to have to do it in

Italy; they probably could have avoided both wars, but this was not according to their plans; and it did not please them either such as the saying goes :—Let us enjoy what time brings us— but rather the benefits of their own valiance and prudence, for time drives everything that comes before it, and is able to bring with it good as well as evil, and evil as well as good.

But let us turn to France and observe whether the state has followed any of the actions mentioned above. I will speak of Louis and not of Charles as he is the one whose course of actions are more useful to the observer, as he held possession of Italy for the longest period; and you will see that he has done the opposite to those things which ought to be done to keep the control of a state composed of different elements.

King Louis came to Italy thanks to the Venetians ambitions, who wanted to gain half the state of Lombardy after his meddling in the region. I will not blame the king on that matter, because, wishing to secure a position in Italy with no friends in the region—and seeing rather that every opportunity was shut to him because of Charles' previous conduct—he was rather forced to ally himself with anyone, and he would have succeeded very quickly in his endeavours if he hadn't made such major mistakes in other matters. The king, however, having acquired Lombardy, swiftly regained the authority lost by Charles: Genoa yielded; he managed to ally himself with the Florentines; the Marquess of Mantua, the Duke of Ferrara, the Bentivogli, my lady of Forli, the Lords of Faenza, of Pesaro, of Rimini, of Camerino, of Piombino, the Lucchese, the Pisans, the Sienese—it seems that everybody lined up to become an ally of his. Then could the Venetians realise at this point the rather hastiness of the course taken by them, the design put in place to let them gain the control of two towns in Lombardy, had given the king

two-thirds of Italy. Let us now consider how the king could have easily maintained his position in Italy had he observed the rules mentioned above, whilst keeping all his friends secure and protected; for although they were many they were both weak and timid, some afraid of the Church's repression, some of the Venetians, and thus they would always have been forced to abide by him, and by their means he could easily have kept himself in security against those who remained powerful. But he acted on the contrary as so as he came to Milan by assisting Pope Alexander to occupy the Romagna. It never occurred to him that this action left him weaker, alienated friends and those who had thrown themselves into his jurisdiction, whilst he made the Church even more powerful by giving strength to the spiritual, thus giving it greater authority. And having committed this prime error, he was obliged to see it through, so much so that, in order to end to the ambition of Alexander, and to prevent him to gain a major foothold in Tuscany, he was himself forced to come to Italy.

And as if empowering the Church even further was not enough, depriving himself of his allies, he, wishing to obtain the kingdom of Naples, shared it with the King of Spain, and where he was the prime ruler in Italy he makes himself an associate, so that the wishful people of that country and the discontented of his own should seek refuge someplace else; and whereas he could have used a right hand man in his place back in his lands, he drove him out, to put one there who was able to drive him, Louis, out in return.

The wish to conquer land is in all honesty very natural and common, and men always do so when they can, and for this they will be praised not blamed; but when they cannot do so, yet wish to do so anyway, then there is madness and blame to

be taken. Therefore, if France could have attacked Naples with her own forces, it then should have done so; if it could not, then it should never have divided it in the first place. And if the partition which it made with the Venetians in Lombardy was justified by the excuse of having a foothold in Italy, this other action deserved to be blamed, for it did was not a necessary action and thus remains unjustified.

Therefore, Louis made these five mistakes: he destroyed the lesser forces, he increased the sphere of influence of one of the greater powers in Italy, he brought in a foreign power, he did not settle in the country, nor did he establish colonies. Which mistakes, had he lived, were not enough to harm him completely if he had not made a sixth by ripping their dominions away from the Venetians; because, had he not influenced the Church's power, nor brought Spain into Italy, it would have been very reasonable and necessary to humble them; but having first taken these steps, he should never have let them collapse, for they, being powerful, would always have kept off others on Lombardy, to which the Venetians would never have consented except to become rulers themselves there; also because the others would not wish to take Lombardy from France in order to give it to the Venetians, and they would never attempt to counter both sides.

And if one were to say: "King Louis yielded the Romagna to Alexander and the kingdom to Spain to avoid war," I answer for the reasons mentioned above that a blunder should never translate as avoiding a war, because it is never simply avoided, but the consequences always act to your disadvantage. And if another should posit that the king had given the Pope this position to obtain a favour from him, that is, in exchange for the annulment of his marriage and for the cap to Rouen, to

that I reply what I shall write later on concerning the faith of princes, and how it should be kept.

Hence, King Louis lost Lombardy by failing to follow any of the requirements observed by those wish to keep the control of the countries they have taken possession of. There is no miracle in this process, everything is rather reasonable and quite natural too. And concerning these subjects I spoke at Nantes with Rouen, when Valentino, as Cesare Borgia, the son of Pope Alexander, was usually called, occupied the Romagna, and on Cardinal Rouen mentioning to me that the Italians did not understand war, I replied to him that the French did not understand statecraft, meaning that otherwise they would not have allowed the Church to reach such a high position. And in fact it has been seen that the power of both the Church and of Spain in Italy has been caused by France, and their demise may also be linked to them. From this common rule of thumb we can posit a rule that never fails: he who makes another one powerful is ruined; because that balance of forces has been brought about either by shrewdness or else by force, and both are looked upon in distrust by him the one who recently acquired that power.