



THE PRINCE

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

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THE PRINCE

**BY
NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI**

TRANSLATED BY W. K. MARRIOTT

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The Prince By Niccolo Machiavelli.

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Youth — Aet. 1-25—1469-94

Office — Aet. 25-43—1494-1512

Literature And Death — Aet. 43-58—1512-27

The Man And His Works

Dedication

Chapter 1. How Many Kinds Of Principalities There Are, And By What Means They Are Acquired

Chapter 2. Concerning Hereditary Principalities

Chapter 3. Concerning Mixed Principalities

Chapter 4. Why The Kingdom Of Darius, Conquered By Alexander, Did Not Rebel Against The Successors Of Alexander At His Death

Chapter 5. Concerning The Way To Govern Cities Or Principalities Which Lived Under Their Own Laws Before They Were Annexed

Chapter 6. Concerning New Principalities Which Are Acquired By One's Own Arms And Ability

Chapter 7. Concerning New Principalities Which Are Acquired Either By The Arms Of Others Or By Good Fortune

Chapter 8. Concerning Those Who Have Obtained A Principality By Wickedness

Chapter 9. Concerning A Civil Principality

Chapter 10. Concerning The Way In Which The Strength Of All Principalities Ought To Be Measured

Chapter 11. Concerning Ecclesiastical Principalities

Chapter 12. How Many Kinds Of Soldiery There Are, And Concerning Mercenaries

Chapter 13. Concerning Auxiliaries, Mixed Soldiery, And One's Own

Chapter 14. That Which Concerns A Prince On The Subject Of The Art Of War

Chapter 15. Concerning Things For Which Men, And Especially Princes, Are Praised Or Blamed

Chapter 16. Concerning Liberality And Meanness

Chapter 17. Concerning Cruelty And Clemency, And Whether It Is Better To Be Loved Than Feared

Chapter 18. Concerning The Way In Which Princes Should Keep Faith

Chapter 19. That One Should Avoid Being Despised And Hated

Chapter 20. Are Fortresses, And Many Other Things To Which Princes Often Resort, Advantageous Or Hurtful?

Chapter 21. How A Prince Should Conduct Himself So As To Gain Renown

Chapter 22. Concerning The Secretaries Of Princes

Chapter 23. How Flatterers Should Be Avoided

Chapter 24. Why The Princes Of Italy Have Lost Their States

Chapter 25. What Fortune Can Effect In Human Affairs And How To Withstand Her

Chapter 26. An Exhortation To Liberate Italy From The Barbarians

Description Of The Methods Adopted By The Duke Valentino When Murdering Vitellozzo Vitelli, Oliverotto Da Fermo, The Signor Pagolo, And The Duke Di Gravina Orsini

The Life Of Castruccio Castracani Of Lucca

With us there is great justice, because that war is just which is necessary, and arms are hallowed when there is no other hope but in them. Here there is the greatest willingness, and where the willingness is great the difficulties cannot be great if you will only follow those men to whom I have directed your attention. Further than this, how extraordinarily the ways of God have been manifested beyond example: the sea is divided, a cloud has led the way, the rock has poured forth water, it has rained manna, everything has contributed to your greatness; you ought to do the rest. God is not willing to do everything, and thus take away our free will and that share of glory which belongs to us.

And it is not to be wondered at if none of the above-named Italians have been able to accomplish all that is expected from your illustrious house; and if in so many revolutions in Italy, and in so many campaigns, it has always appeared as if military virtue were exhausted, this has happened because the old order of things was not good, and none of us have known how to find a new one. And nothing honours a man more than to establish new laws and new ordinances when he himself was newly risen. Such things when they are well founded and dignified will make him revered and admired, and in Italy there are not wanting opportunities to bring such into use in every form.

Here there is great valour in the limbs whilst it fails in the head. Look attentively at the duels and the hand-to-hand combats, how superior the Italians are in strength, dexterity, and subtlety. But when it comes to armies they do not bear comparison, and this springs entirely from the insufficiency of the leaders, since those who are capable are not obedient, and each one seems to himself to know, there having never been any one so distinguished above the rest, either by valour or fortune, that others would yield to him. Hence it is that for so long a time, and during so much fighting in the past twenty years, whenever there has been an army wholly Italian, it has always given a poor account of itself; the first witness to this is Il Taro, afterwards Alessandria, Capua, Genoa, Vaila, Bologna, Mestri.⁴⁷ If, therefore, your illustrious house wishes to follow these remarkable men who have redeemed their country, it is necessary before all things, as a true foundation for every enterprise, to be provided with your own forces, because there can be no more faithful, truer, or better soldiers. And although singly they are good, altogether they will be much better when they find themselves commanded by their prince, honoured by him, and maintained at his expense. Therefore it is necessary to be prepared with such arms, so that you can be defended against foreigners by Italian valour.

And although Swiss and Spanish infantry may be considered very formidable, nevertheless there is a defect in both, by reason of which a third order would not only be able to oppose them, but might be relied upon to overthrow them. For the Spaniards cannot resist cavalry, and the Switzers are afraid of infantry whenever

⁴⁷ *The battles of Il Taro, 1495; Alessandria, 1499; Capua, 1501; Genoa, 1507; Vaila, 1509; Bologna, 1511; Mestri, 1513.*

