

## MACHIAVELLI - THE PRINCE

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**Annotation:** This article provides information about the significance of Niccolo di Bernardo Machiavelli's work "The Prince" and the main concepts presented in it. The importance of the work in that period and in the present day, as well as how important it is, is discussed. In addition, Machiavelli's main ideas, concepts and their meanings are briefly explained through real-life examples. Although the work was considered inappropriate for its time and was banned from being read by the churches of that period, it has survived to the present day and has caused many discussions.

**Key words:** Machiavelli, virtu, fortuna, political realism, politic idealism, Medici, state, army, Italy, property.

### The entrance

"The Prince" is one of the works written by Machiavelli, who lived between 1469 and 1527. N. Machiavelli was not only a writer, but also a politician, historian, political thinker, public figure, philosopher and is considered one of the founders of modern political science and political philosophy. He lived during the era of political idealism and is regarded as one of those who initiated and contributed to the emergence and development of a new approach - political realism. While writing the work, his life experience, diplomatic practice and knowledge of the battlefield, politics proved useful. One of Machiavelli's most famous ideas is that the people can be ruled either through love or through strictness and that the latter is more effective and long-lasting.

Another one of Machiavelli's ideas known to many is "Virtu and Fortuna". Virtu refers to a person's own actions, ideas, plans and even the cunning or deceit they might employ. Fortuna, on the other hand, means "fate" and is viewed as a person's destiny, luck or events that cannot be changed by human action. Machiavelli considers both equally important in conquering and governing states, and even in life, but he also emphasizes that virtu is more significant.

### Main part

The work begins, first of all, with a dedication to Lorenzo de Medici and consists of a total of 26 chapters. The first 1-11 chapters discuss the types of states, chapters 12-14 cover military forces and leadership, chapters 15-23 deal with the character and behavior of the ruler, and the final 3 chapters focus on the state of Italy, the call to free it from the hands of the barbarians, and the concluding words about strong leadership. Although the work was considered inappropriate for

its time and was banned from being read by the churches of that period, it has survived to the present day and has caused many discussions.

At the beginning of the work, it starts with the section on the types of states and how to acquire them. Machiavelli divides states that are ruled or being ruled into republics and principalities. He further divides principalities into inherited and new states. In acquiring a state, the ruler attains it either by his own arms, by the arms of others, by glory and honor or by the favor of fortune.

After discussing the types of states, the means of acquiring and defending power are considered. The ruler's army that defends his country can be his own, an allied army, a mercenary force, or a mixed army. "Allied and mercenary armies are dangerous and will never be loyal. They serve during peace but leave you when war begins". Machiavelli supports not being overly merciful to soldiers, because if the army does not fear its ruler, it becomes prone to rebellion.

In the following sections, the work discusses the prince's character. All people, especially rulers who stand above others, possess qualities worthy of praise or blame. Some are generous, some stingy, some extravagant, some cruel, some cunning, some shy, some pious, some immoral, and so on. A ruler cannot embody only the good qualities, so he must abandon the vices that could remove him from the throne or cause him to lose power and restrain himself from the rest as much as possible. Regarding a ruler's generosity and frugality, it is better that he does not gain a reputation as a generous ruler among the people. Initially, the ruler distributes treasure and food to the population, yet even then people accuse him of stinginess. The treasury is not limitless, and when it runs out, the ruler who has earned the title "generous" does not want to lose that name and may impose excessive taxes or turn to improper ways of taking money from the people, eventually provoking their anger. Therefore, if the spoils or wealth are obtained through plunder or taxes, the ruler should be open-handed and, if necessary, share everything with his soldiers, gaining respect, fame and honor. However, if it is the ruler's own property, he should refrain from distributing it indiscriminately, otherwise he will harm only himself.

In the final sections the author discusses the future of Italy and finishes the book with following lines:

"Virtue against fury

Shall take up arms; and the fight be short;

For ancient valour

Is not dead in Italian hearts."

### **Conclusion**

"The Prince" not only encompasses Machiavelli's views and the advice given to rulers, but each event and piece of information is supported by several historical examples. In addition,



Machiavelli presents not only one side's opinions but also those of the opposing side, explaining why they think that way and why such thinking is mistaken, thus engaging both politicians and readers alike. Another important aspect of the work is that it has not lost its relevance even today. While it served as a guide for the rulers of that time, today it remains one of the main sources for leaders, aspiring leaders and political philosophers to study the ideas of that era and political realism.

**Resources:**

1. Machiavelli - The Prince book:

<https://apeiron.iulm.it/retrieve/handle/10808/4129/46589/Machiavelli>

2. Google: LiveLib

<https://www.livelib.ru/author/19638-nikkolo-makiavelli>

3. Google: wikipediya

<https://ru.wikipedia.org>

4. YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/GCL0bI0i-00>

5. YouTube

<https://youtu.be/tKMYvCMFIJw>

6. Google: wikipedia