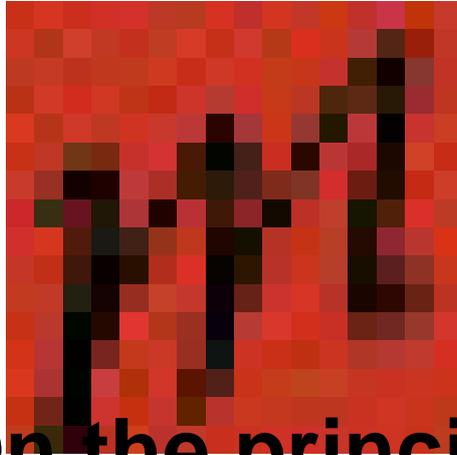


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III.7 On the principle of monarchy

- The Spirit of Law - Book III. On the principles of the three governments -

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III.7 On the principle of monarchy

Monarchical government, as we have said, supposes pre-eminences, ranks, and even a founding nobility. The nature of *honor* is to claim preferences and distinctions ; it is therefore inherently in its place in this government.

Ambition is pernicious in a republic. It has good effects in a monarchy : it gives life to that government, and has the advantage of not being dangerous, because there it can be constantly repressed.

You could say that it is analogous to the system of the universe, where there is a force that constantly pulls all bodies away from the center, and a gravitational force that pulls them back towards the center. Honor gives movement to every part of the body politic ; it binds them by its very action, and it so happens that everyone contributes to the common good, while thinking he is attending to his individual concerns.

It is true that, philosophically speaking, it is a false honor that directs all parts of the state ; but that false honor is as useful to the public as true honor would be to individuals who might possess it.

And is it not a great deal to oblige men to perform all the difficult acts, ones that require strength, without any recompense other than the glory of those acts ?