

On Principalities.

A disquisition from Gareth Tancred Wilfrith

A revision done by the hand of the author in the year reckoned by most to be Two Thousand Five. This revision does not substantively change the text of the original manuscript, being completed several years before, but does incorporate some changes in wording and punctuation, as well as some minor clarifications by which it is hoped the reader will find these pages more enjoyable and profitable.

Special thanks are here extended to Master Hector of the Black Heights, whose friendship I have enjoyed for several decades, and whose good counsel and sharp wit has extended for precisely the numbers of days of our acquaintance. Master Hector graciously read this disquisition as with a glass and needle, finding small and precise ways in which it could be bettered. The sum effect of such findings is significant. You, dear reader, should consider yourself in debt to him for these improvements.

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By way of introduction

From time to time, peoples wrestle with the issue of what ought to be their counsel to their Crown in the matter of the creation of a principality. Good and patient Crowns seek the wise counsel of their people, and it is the duty of the people to then consider carefully their counsel. The burdens of the Crown are sufficient without being required to bear the unprocessed surface impressions and unprepared disputations of a people unwilling to

consider important issues, carefully.

The issue of creating principalities should not be taken lightly.

I have witnessed, first hand, many good people leaving our Society because they once threw themselves into the creation of a principality without counting the cost. I have seen groups fracture, and once-flourishing regions taking years to recover from a period of malaise. I have seen friends turned against one another, and against their Crown.

I have also seen groups, and fine individuals, and regions flourish and hit their stride through the process of forming a principality. I have seen new, proud kingdoms emerge from successful principalities, and regions in which the Society has become a more perfect thing because of the energy emerging from a new principality.

There are, therefore, several things to be considered. I would take an assortment of considerations and offer these, some examinations:

of first, some of the divers kinds of principalities, and some of the ways in which principalities work within a Kingdom;

of second, some considerations of what may be among the costs of the creation of principalities, especially in how sometimes well meaning people desire to remedy conditions that are, with experience, seen to be made worse (and not better) by the creation of a principality;

and of third, some concerns about the process of creating principalities, and how the very path a people take infects the destination with good and bad qualities.

In the course of serving many Crowns and Coronets, I have witnessed both good and bad results. It is only right that I do not attempt to hide how I have profited from the good people who have so freely given of themselves in similar service. My role is not unlike that of one who watches the gardener toil, noting with pleasure or pain the results of another's toils. There is benefit in the recollections of such an observer, but it should not be confused with the work of the gardener. It would be unjust for me to deny the right humility with which I ought to offer these observations.

It is also a pleasant duty to acknowledge my inspiration and helpmeet, Mistress Kathleen Allen, and Glen Garethson, my God-given son, who bears much, although perhaps not as much as he will remember after he passes twelve years of age.

For those who may have served with me in the past or present, please accept my pledge that the words and examples herein contained are taken from the whole of my experiences and observations, and are not the report of any individual situation. I have changed no names, for I am citing no specific cases. Each reference to Kingdom is a reference to all, and to no Kingdom; and likewise to Crowns, Coronets, Principalities, Peers, and such.

I do apologize to you, dear reader, if you are offended by the length or the style of this discourse. Please believe that this length is because of the importance of the topic, and the great fear I have over the possible harms that the careless enactment of principalities could bring to people about whom I truly care. If I were more skilled, I could write with fewer words. This style is enacted to help situate the conversation in these Current Middle Ages. I have endeavored to make the text readable, while marking it as something

not of the modern world. I desire with all of my heart, and with considerable musing, that no one who is not of our beloved Society apply these words to their modern political situation.

Part the first

in which I consider some of the divers kinds of principalities, and some of the ways in which principalities work within a Kingdom

There have been several forms of principality allowed in the Society, and because the forms available are quite limited by current law, and more importantly, yet less obviously, by current interpretation of that law and by Kingdom tradition and practice, let me begin by charging that any discussion of the formation of a principality begin by a careful examination of the models available to you, in your kingdom, with the Society and Kingdom Officers, and the Crowns involved, at this particular moment.

I offer two sub-parts to this charge:

First, do not ever expect that the case at one time, especially if preceded with a charge such as “this is the way it has always been,” will be the case at another time. Principalities, and Kingdom laws, and Corporate needs, and the moon; these four things are almost equally regular in the changes of their presentation to the people. Ours is a living society, and that means that the decision made last quarter might be unrecognizable in its newness next month. Until the last ink has dried from Their Majesties’ quills, do not allow yourself to be unalterably committed to one form or name.

Second, do not allow yourself to rely on the wisdom to be found within one person, no matter how informed that person might be. This text, and its author, is to be considered entirely within this category. Very few things outside of the Crown Tournament finals and the highest arts and sciences competitions, are the work of one individual, and even these events always have within them the marks of scores of quiet laborers, guides and judges. There is no emperor of all the Society, although some of its lessor citizens seem to pursue that title with ardor. Therefore, no one person can speak with the entire force of the historic Society, and especially that part of history which has not yet occurred.

The Province or Barony, as Principality

There have been, at various times, several types of principalities.

For example, at times a Province has been formed, which did not have a coronet, but was still endowed with some of the properties of a principality. There has been much opposition to this form, because of difficulties with fealty and relations to the Crown, so proceed in this direction most carefully, and without much hope.

Still at other times, a barony has served in many of the capacities of a principality. This is usually achieved by the liberal use of cantons or non-territorial groups (such as colleges, ports or strongholds), instead of the non-dependent shires, so that the baronial awards, and regalia, and ceremonies, are the awards, regalia and ceremonies of a large area of the kingdom.

There are two important cautions about this approach, one formal and one informal. Formally, there is a great and legitimate concern that the barony truly fully serve all of the people within its boundaries, without prejudice to their place of domicile within the baronial territory. So, for an instance, if a Barony includes four small cantons (or a Province, four ridings) which are located near the edges of the baronial lands, the people of the canton must have unimpeded access to baronial awards, offices, and the coronet.

Thus, if a very large subgroup is flanked by smaller subgroups, all of whom are part of one barony, which is the group, the Crown may choose a subject from one of the smaller subgroups to serve as baron of them all. Likewise, baronial awards may not be denied subjects of the smaller subgroups, for the reason that they are not part of the central subgroup.

The less formal, yet still substantial concern about this approach is one of accountability. Our Society has experienced some difficulties with “center-less” baronies, that is, baronies comprised of a number of groups of roughly equal stature. Specifically, it has on occasion happened that the hard work of the barony went lacking, because each of the small groups identified with their own canton as a group, rather than as a subgroup. Thus, the highest honor, and the foremost responsibility, was seen to be filling the canton’s offices and conducting the canton’s business, while each canton pointed at the others to take responsibility for the barony’s business. It is not of benefit to our people, our kingdom, or our beloved Crown to establish baronies that are not loved of the people, whose business goes undone, whose courts are not attended, and whose offices are reserved for the less competent and the person new to our Society.

The Crown Principality

At other times, Crown Principalities have been formed. These sometimes take the form of a principality but serve, and are served, by their Crown and Coronet in one personage. There is therefore no Coronet tournament, although there could be principality officers and awards, even regalia and ceremonies, although obviously, the Coronet may be from outside of the principality’s physical boundaries.

There are subjects who would cry that no Principality could be well served by a Prince from some other land. Yet some who wear the Crown wear it as the Crown of the whole land, of all regions, and not as the turn of this or that region. Thus if you consider the spiritual nature of our Crowns, how the individuals who serve in this most trusted office inhabit the titles, deeds and histories of all who have preceded and all who will follow, the accident of physical residence may not be a critical flaw. Such Crowns may well serve a land as Prince, even if not from that region.

The Crown Principality is sometimes held as a reasonable stage for a principality on its road to a coronet, or of necessity of a principality in a short period of crisis in the absence of a coronet. It is also, perhaps, a reasonable alternative for some special situation on a long-term basis.

Regions serving as principalities

Some peoples have pursued a regional approximation of the principality. Most Kingdoms have had regions, which function as an administrative tool of the Crown and Great Officers, to make the functioning of the kingdom proceed more smoothly. In some Kingdoms, at some times, these regions have begun to take on some of the responsibilities and roles of the principality. There is a matter of great concern, here, however, and this is important, in that many good people have been unnecessarily hurt. All authority of the glories of the Lands come through the Crowns of those lands, and through the Crowns to those upon whom those Crowns choose to lend their mantles. It is within the Right of the Crown to insist that no region make awards, or have champions, or participate in any activities which may be honorably considered to be within the Rights of the Crown.

It is possible to construct a Society in which administrative necessity governs the form and function. In fact, we are not short of such societies in the modern world. One thing, one important thing, that separates our Society from the Modern world is a fundamental change in this sensibility. It is not that which is most efficient, but rather that which is most right, that governs our Society. We may choose to refrain from making war upon the person of efficiency, but it will be our Crowns who lead us into, or who hold us back from such a war, or any other.

It is one thing for some people of a region to meet to better discharge the responsibilities which have been placed upon their shoulders by their Crown. It is another thing, a destructive thing, though seldom intended, for a group of people in a region to assume some of the responsibilities specifically reserved for the Crown. Society and Kingdom law, tradition, and the Word of the Crown, through all past and future generations, ultimately will govern specific practices.

But the wise will beware. The Baronage of specific lands within a Kingdom are held in fealty to the Crown, not by Right of any baron. Peers of the Realm may or may not be endowed with special responsibilities as a result of specific fealties. Yet in the absence of a specific grant from the Crown, no officers or members of the general populace, no matter how they might be selected, may take upon themselves any of the Rights of the Crown. For example, no group of people may exclude subjects of the Crown from participation in a contest, unless that right is granted from the Crown, as in a baronial tournament.

Thus, in some cases, when it is those things that needs come from the Crown, a region will not satisfy the desires of the people of an area. Further, if such needs are met by the grant by the Crown, such a grant is at the pleasure of the Crown, and may be removed at any time.

Principalities as a permanent part of the Kingdom

One of the most common forms of the principality is as a permanent feature of a mature kingdom.

As our Society continues to grow, we need to reconcile the size and distance and sheer

numbers of population of our kingdoms, with the unacceptable potential of “every town a kingdom.” The greatness of a kingdom is measured by the numbers of people within its boundaries, or by the amount of land within its borders only by those with the motives of the jackal or the reasoning of a slug. Is a kingdom great if its populace speaks of nothing but its shortcomings? Does a great kingdom conduct its business in empty courts? Is a kingdom measured to be great if it elevates the meanest to peerage and to positions of power? How can a kingdom be great if its barons know not the name nor the countenance of its Crown?

Historically, one of the greatest challenges of holding a great kingdom together is its administration, and especially its ability to forge together the histories and traditions and strengths of its many constituent kingdoms. Do not try to rule the Mongols as the Chinese. Some might add, “do not try to rule the Picts at all.” Nevertheless, we do attempt to do these things, and more.

One way this path can be successful is to recognize constituent “kingdoms” within the kingdom. It is important that each subject is the subject of one crown, and hails from one kingdom. Nevertheless, it is possible that as the people who live in certain areas within a kingdom grow together, suffer together, and triumph together, they will find a spirit of camaraderie which, if properly directed, will contribute to the greatness of the kingdom. The principality can serve to be such a director.

Principalities as a stepping stone to a new Kingdom

The requirements for establishment of a new kingdom are stringent. There is great wisdom in this, for should a kingdom start and then dissolve, the blot upon all of us would remain forever. Nevertheless, if we maintain such high standards for the establishment of a new kingdom, yet retain many of the powers and rights and responsibilities within an existing Crown, incipient kingdoms may find that prayer and supplication for Divine intervention is the only possible course to kingdom.

Therefore, it is of great service to be able to accept the protection and guidance of your existing kingdom, enriched by history and tradition and bolstered by laws and customs that have been tried and tested. Such a great gift can be given only by a great kingdom, and those who have given it freely have been richly rewarded.

When it has not been freely given, whether by strategic choice or by lack of vision, this path is poison.

It is not necessary for each ratcatcher in each alley of the kingdom to know and agree with the proposed course, that of establishing a new kingdom by way of a principality, for the path to be smooth. It is absolutely necessary, however, that the true and right leadership of the kingdom, including those most likely to be Crown in the next several years, those who serve in critical Kingdom offices, and those to whom wise people in the kingdom turn for counsel in trying times, all understand the desired, or at least potential outcome of this principality. Not all need to like the idea, but all must be resolved to it.

This is a high standard, but I speak with certainty: When the leadership of a kingdom is unified in the vision, the path will be wondrous, and empowering and easy. Few will

perish in the journey. Yet if there are persons of great counsel in the kingdom who refuse to accept this potential outcome, people will leave our beloved Society. It is seldom the case that any kingdom can prevent a determined group of the populace from eventually forming their own kingdom. It is always the case that a kingdom can set the bloodprice.

Therefore, this is the one advice that matters most, of all I might ramble about in this discourse:

Let those who seek to create a kingdom through establishment of a principality be honest about those goals;

Let those who are petitioned with such a request set aside all petty injuries and childish fears and graciously work towards a healthful resolution; and

Let all who consider the question of principality come to grips with their expectations early in the process; for as with a festering wound, postponing the treatment will not ever make the pain less intense.

This does not mean that all teleologies must be worked out in advance. No one can see the eventual outcomes of such far-reaching movements, once set in course. But this can be the subject of conversations, of open, and forthright, and constructive dialectics. We can all set into this task confident that each's motives are, to the extent they are known, available to those also on the journey. Know why your fellow travelers believe they are on this road.

Do not say, nor trust those who say, "let us just take the first steps without concern for their direction, for we need to start moving, and we can change direction later." The direction of your first step will do more to set your course than will the direction of your thousandth step.

Part the second

in which I consider some considerations of what may be the costs of the creation of principalities, especially in how sometimes well meaning people desire to cause fixes to conditions that are, with experience, seen to be made worse (and not better) by the creation of a principality

The astute person will ask those who argue for the creation of a principality for their reasons, for while there are some wonderful good reasons for creating a principality, and several conditions that likely will be remedied through it, many of the reasons given will not be remedied by the creation of a principality.

Lest I be rightly accused of focusing on the negatives, I will begin with some examples of reasons that will likely be satisfied by the creation of a principality. I will then address some of the reasons often given for the creation of a principality which likely will not be satisfied.

There is a shortage of leadership opportunities in our area,

or,

We have an abundance of leaders at the local level, but too few with the experience necessary to effectively serve at Kingdom level.

Some areas of some kingdoms have developed a level of maturity, through a slower-than-usual transition between generations of leadership, that will result in a situation in which there are inadequate opportunities for leadership within the society.

Especially in an area populated by large, developed groups, it may be years before a new, competent and energetic member has the opportunity to step into formal leadership roles. This may result in some of the most competent leadership potential drifting away into other organizational opportunities, leaving the Society in that area with a large gap between the (perhaps aging) most experienced individuals, and the person who has been attending for less than a year. At its worst, an area may become so firmly entrenched in the hands of a few experienced leaders, who pass responsibilities among themselves, that truly competent new leaders quickly size up the situation and quietly leave.

Obviously, given this situation, the creation of a new principality, with its many leadership requirements, offers new and exciting challenges to the underutilized leadership. This will, in turn, free up local leadership opportunities for less experienced leaders.

Principalities offer an opportunity to develop leadership beyond the local level. In some kingdoms it is not much of a step between the two, but in some kingdoms it is difficult to move from service at the local level to the responsibilities of kingdom-level office. For local-level officers, the principality offers an opportunity to gain hands-on understanding of the challenges of providing administrative assistance to people you do not regularly see in your local group's meetings. It is a different experience to respond to the concerns of those you know, and of those who you can take aside for a quiet word after your group's meeting, than to respond to those you have not met, and whose local meeting experience is very different from your own.

Some of our kingdoms do not take the experience of serving those from other groups to be a prerequisite for service in kingdom office. Some of our kingdoms suffer from the assumption that this experience is not necessary.

One caution should be added here. It is sometimes the case that the appearance of a lack of qualified leaders at the kingdom level can be attributed to other causes. If, for example, potential kingdom leaders see that those who serve in kingdom office are not treated with dignity and respect, or that it is assumed that all kingdom officers ought to come from a specific geographic region, or household, there will likely be difficulty finding adequate applicants for kingdom office. The addition of principalities, with their attendant opportunity for increased leadership training, will not improve this deficiency.

We have a strong regional identity, and this could be even more healthy with structural support

It is sometimes the case that the people in an area develop a strong identity, an identity that extends beyond that of any one group. Such an identity can be a powerful, attractive thing.

Sometimes such an identity, once established in an area, can be strengthened, and perhaps channeled in ways that will continue to be productive, with the creation of a principality. The songs, stories, personalities and histories of an area can be strengthened and preserved, and new energy and many resources can be marshaled through the structures of a principality. Given the right beginnings, a principality can make things even better.

Of course, when a strong identity emerges without a principality, any successful principality must have the support of those who lead through this identity. Any principality established must work with this identity, or risk wrenching internal conflict.

Other areas of the kingdom are organized around principalities, and our area is the only, or one of two areas not yet principalized.

If indeed the rest of the kingdom is organized in principalities, then by all means an area ought to organize in the same fashion. This presumes that the kingdom has already worked out the significant problems of many principalities, to wit:

There is a strong identity for the kingdom, and it has not receded behind the identities of the principalities. There have been, from time to time, kingdoms which have become objects of mirth because of the low regard with which their own subjects hold them. It is possible to hold both a strong principality, and a strong kingdom identity, but it does not come easily nor naturally.

There are sufficient resources to do justice to the work of the kingdom. Each area has a finite amount of resources, in the talents and energies of its people, and in gold. It is a shame when the regalia of a kingdom is tattered and in disrepair, or its offices go unfilled, because its people lack the resources to support both the principality and the kingdom.

A parallel concern is that which the rest of the kingdom ought to hold whenever a principality is formed. Because of the tremendous work and resources required to create a principality worthy of honor (any small group of fools can create a foolish principality, with bits of left-over cloth and childish puns), any time a principality is formed the rest of the kingdom should expect to be called upon to take the places of those who need to support their principality. As mentioned before, this might be a gain within those kingdoms in which there is a shortage of service opportunities.

There are, indeed, sufficient resources to support a principality in the area not yet served by principalities. It is sometimes the case that areas possessing fewer resources can make the most of those resources without a principality structure to isolate them from the beneficence of the kingdom. A principality may offer many benefits, but these benefits have a cost to the areas served.

Reasons less suitable

These are, of course, but samples of some of the good reasons for creating a principality. Unfortunately, it is often a poorer reason that is cited. Following are several reasons often given for creating a principality, and why the creation of a principality is unlikely to remedy these conditions.

We are geographically isolated, too few people come to visit us, and we seldom see the Crown at events in our area

This set of reasons is often given for the creation of principalities. It is possible that most of the Known World's principalities have been created in response to this concern, together with the next. Tragically, this condition is usually made worse by the creation of the principality, so that the populace within the new principality finds itself even more isolated than before.

In most kingdoms with far-flung reaches, the wise and careful leaders attend to the needs of those. They often intentionally schedule occasional Kingdom events near the borders, and often the requests of the subjects from afar receive special consideration.

This does not mean, of course, that the farthest regions of a kingdom receive as many kingdom events as does the core, for what is far from the center of the kingdom is insurmountable from the opposite far reaches.

Further, often people, by nature egocentric, will count each event not in their area as away, holding two categories, one of events in our area, and one of events not in our area. Thus, while an area may see itself as far from the center, it is usual that some other area will see it as at, or near, the center. Therefore, while I might see one kingdom event in my area every two years as being neglectful (assuming four such events each year), if my kingdom holds three regions at three extremes of the kingdom, and each has one such event every two years, then from the perspective of someone living at the center of the kingdom, which is usually the great abundance of subjects, nearly half of the kingdom events are held far away from the bulk of the populace.

So would the creation of a principality not solve this neglect? Sadly, often no, for three reasons.

First, upon creation of a principality, the large groups in the area are required to hold at least two principality events a year. Most principalities formed for this reason have at most one or two large groups, capable of hosting such an event. So if these large groups are hosting one or two of the required principality events, it is a significant burden on them to also host a kingdom event (often held within a month or two of the principality event). After all, a kingdom may only hold an event in a group that has bid for the event.

Could not a smaller group host a principality event? Sadly, most smaller groups lack the people and experience to successfully host an event that will be a credit to the principality. A new principality needs to establish itself as a thing of honor, of beauty. Enduring a principality event in its first few years in which the site was inadequate or key event items overlooked will risk the new principality's self-image as that of a pretender to the rank of principality, not as a principality rightly recognized.

And it is a tragedy to see small groups burned out for one or two years (or longer) because they were called to give so much of themselves to an event that was beyond their group's capabilities.

So it is common for a new principality to not host a kingdom event for its first several years. Given that such events are the most common place in which people from far places meet, any such contact will most likely take place out of the principality, meaning that the majority of the people in the principality will not come into contact with the leadership of the kingdom unless they themselves travel. This results in more, not less, isolation.

The second reason the creation of a principality often fails to remedy the feeling of isolation for a principality springs from the significant demands of a principality. In its first several years, the majority of the leadership of an area will be called upon to help form this principality, and to establish its ongoing customs, laws, and culture. It is easy to form a principality that is no credit to its people, but a principality that captures the respect of all who visit takes time and careful attention. Such work dare not be pressed into the care of a small group of people, for a healthy principality must be of the people, and every new principality risks being perceived as the tool of one or two baronies.

Therefore, the very group of people who would otherwise be available to serve in kingdom-level positions, either as officers, or as leaders in the peerages, or as members of royal retinues, or as members supporting an office (such as the college of heralds, or the marshals) are no longer available for kingdom-level service. It has been my experience that those who have assumed kingdom leadership positions disappear for several years during the creation of a new principality, as their available time and energy are needed at home.

These leaders, of course, are typically the first connecting line to the main of the kingdom, and when they withdraw from these bridge roles, the people who look to them as local leaders feel more, not less, isolated.

The third reason that the isolation of an area is typically not ameliorated by the creation of a principality lies in the attitudes and actions of the leadership of the kingdom, from areas outside of the new principality.

As aforementioned, wise and careful leaders especially attend to the needs of their kingdom's subjects who are located farthest from the center. Every kingdom must, from time to time, tolerate leaders who are neither wise nor careful. Some leaders do not care so much for those living farther away, but see their wearing of the Crown as a boon to their own home area. Such leaders-in-name (for they are followed only by those looking for spoils from the royal tables), paradoxically offer the kingdom an opportunity to demonstrate its greatness, for the great kingdom will survive such occasional leadership and even grow through these times, as the true leaders band together to protect the kingdom from vanities and excesses.

Each wise and careful leader, which are in the main and most usual, will make especial efforts to reach out to subjects at the borders, lest their loyalties drift. Then what occurs when a prince and princess arise to rule these farthest lands in the name of the Crown? What is the effect of the creation of a principality at a kingdom's far border?

A burden is lifted, and a great relief felt. Now the responsibility for reaching out to these lands is lifted, for the Coronet assumes these burdens. Further, the people of these reaches will of the most part be so busied with the creation of this new thing of beauty, a jewel of the crown, that they will not be so quick to notice, or to complain, of an underrepresentation of their number in various orders and awards.

Leaders of the kingdom who exerted especial efforts to travel to events in these far lands will not now feel so sharply the need to travel long distances. Members of the peerages who once gladly assumed the burden of traveling and teaching to these far areas may now relax, not feeling as compelled to travel to a coronet tournament for a principality that is not theirs.

Thus, while complaints about isolation from the kingdom usually significantly decrease upon the formation of a principality, actual contact with the other parts of the kingdom often decreases, and therefore real isolation is usually increased with the creation of a principality. This can be examined in the histories of principalities. Especially from those principalities created in far reaches, the reader may enumerate the gentles from the lands who were involved in leadership positions within the greater kingdom before creation of the principality, and then enumerate the like in the few years after the principality's creation.

We are not adequately rewarded by the Crown

Another commonly stated issue, linked to the former, pleads that the creation of a principality will remedy the lack of recognition received from the Crown, as evidenced in various awards, elevations and honors.

Sadly, the creation of a principality usually is a mixed blessing in this regard, and too often gives candy where substance is needed.

It is often the case that an inadequate number of the deserving populace are recognized by the Crown. It is a task Herculean to stay in touch with the hundreds of deserving members of the populace scattered throughout the large kingdom. Further, some kingdoms leave the bulk of the task of gathering recommendations to the Crown, choosing to privilege the individual processual preferences of each Crown over the valuing of the available time of Their Majesties.

All principalities have the right to create, and to award principality awards, for any reason. Many Kingdoms by custom, and some by law, delegate the awarding of awards of arms to the Coronet. Few kingdoms allow the delegation of mid-level awards (typically for fighting, arts and sciences, and service) to the Coronet, and none allow the elevation of peers of the realm by the Coronet.

It is clear that many more awards are given out in most principalities than before their establishment. Some new principalities hand out so many awards that its subjects begin to don the attitude of merit badge pursuit, with sashes and collars to display their many tokens.

For those kingdoms who delegate the award of arms to the Coronet, recipients of the principality are made armigerous much sooner than their neighbors.

And yet, here is the breakdown.

Often when people in an area complain about the lack of recognition, it is not primarily the awards which rank below the Award of Arms that is the need—it is the level of awards that mark respect throughout the kingdom and society. Unfortunately, the creation of a principality usually exacerbates this problem.

The Crown is most likely to rely upon their own experience, and upon the recommendations of people they know and respect for the awarding of these honors. The wise Crown will rely heavily upon the counsel of its peerage orders for counsel upon elevation to these orders.

Yet the creation of a principality will tend to decrease this very contact, thus decreasing the likelihood of recognition above the award of arms level.

First, the likelihood will decrease because the Crown will see fewer leaders of the principality. As aforementioned, the creation of a principality places many new demands upon the leadership of an area, demands on time and energy that will likely lead to the decrease in their out-of-principality travel. Coronets and principality officers especially are often expected to attend all events held within a principality. This will often prevent travel to conflicting major kingdom events held elsewhere. It would be a cold-hearted Prince, after all, who would choose to attend an event across the kingdom over the event of some small group within their principality.

It is a matter of expectations: Few expect the Crown to attend their event, being one in ten or twenty across the kingdom; yet few would not expect the Coronet to attend the only event in the principality that weekend.

So if the Crown does not see the leaders of the principality, and does not travel as often to events within the principality, having a proxy to attend on behalf of the Crown, the Crown will be less likely to have personal experience of the recent accomplishments of deserving gentles. Further, the Crown will be less likely to see the leaders of the principality who would speak personally of these gentles' accomplishments.

It is true that letters can still be sent, but many Crowns will weigh personal contact much more highly than advice received in a letter.

Further, the populace will likely attend more closely to that which is closer and to that which is novel. Thus, given the accomplishments of an individual in the arts, for example, most people in the principality will attend to recommending someone for (or one of) the new principality arts award(s), rather than for the mid-level Kingdom arts award. Meanwhile, the populace in the regions not served by the principality will focus their attempts at achieving recognition for deserving fellows on the Kingdom awards, rather than on those of a principality.

The result can be that deserving people in the principality are underrepresented among the kingdom-wide awards and orders, compared to where they were before the creation of the principality. Those subjects of lands not served by principalities may be more fairly recognized for their accomplishments and contributions.

It then follows that, slower to receipt of a kingdom-level award, and given the decreased likelihood of principality peers traveling to events in other areas of the kingdom, the

populous of a principality may be slower in elevation to peerage. It is unlikely in most kingdoms that an individual who is unknown to the Crown and to most of the Order, and who has not yet received an award ranking above an award of arms will be elevated to the peerage—even if he or she is strongly supported by the Coronet (who typically is not invited to peerage meetings).

We don't see the Crown often enough

At the risk of repetition of similar points, let it suffice to repeat that, given the existence of a Coronet to represent the Crown, it is less likely that Crowns will travel to events in a principality than in a region without a Coronet.

It may be worthwhile to add that it is less likely that fighters from a principality will be successful in Crown Tournaments for two reasons.

First, given the awkwardness, and often the law, of fighting in Crown Tournament while serving as Coronet, at least one or two of the principalities best fighters will not participate in each Crown Tournament.

Second, those who are the most serious contenders at Crown Tournament typically have recent experience with the fighting styles representative of various parts of the kingdom. Despite legends, the disadvantages of seeing fighting styles for the first time in Crown Lists are not easily overcome.

If the fighters with an eye to Crown are also among the leadership of the new principality, and one would hope they would be, they will find it difficult to both serve in the principality and to do the requisite traveling.

We are different in significant ways from the rest of the kingdom

This claim is worrisome, and if it be heard, should be the subject of investigation by those who truly care for the future of the kingdom. When those who wish to create a principality offer for a reason that they share too little with the people of the rest of the kingdom, it does not fare well for the future of either the principality or the kingdom.

Two of the central values of our Society are inclusiveness and diversity. We take it to be a significant strength that all who are willing to conduct themselves with honor are welcome at our events, and see it as an asset that we might encounter Sixth Century Byzantines, Twelfth Century Highlanders, and Fifteenth Century Italians at the same event. We are a stronger Society because of our embrace of gentles with interests of variety, including many arts and sciences, fighting arts and pursuits of courtly virtues. A demonstration of balanced interests is required for elevation to the peerage.

Thus, if those desiring to create a principality claim a lack of common ground with the rest of the kingdom, it is indicative of a defect in either those seeking the principality or in the kingdom. Such a claim should provoke concerns that either those creating the principality intend to create their own mini-kingdom, from which they can exclude those with diverse interests; or concerns that the kingdom has, intentionally or not, become ingrown and cliquish. Either concern ought to be a matter of alarm to those who lead the

kingdom.

The creation of a principality will not fix this problem. At best, it will postpone the problem until it rears its ugly head in the form of a principality vs. kingdom conflict, or in an unacceptable loyal-to-the-Crown-barony vs. the loyal-to-the-principality-barony.

The rest of the kingdom does not like us

Of no less gravity than the previous, this expressed concern should be sufficient for the leadership of a kingdom to immediately investigate the roots of the concern.

Such concerns should not be easily dismissed, for in too many cases, kingdoms stray into a form of nepotism, in which individuals with similar likes, philosophies, or modern socio-economic backgrounds manage to wrest control of the kingdom's offices, institutions, or even the succession of the Crown.

Once voiced, this concern ought to be carefully considered, and if found to be true, steps ought to be taken to seek immediate remedy. If false, those expressing such desires ought to be sternly and privately counseled to cease such rumoring.

The creation of a principality will in no way ameliorate such a problematic situation. It will instead either cast into prominence those who would spread such ugly rumors, or further cement the hold of the few upon the kingdom, relegating those who differ in perspective to the outlying principalities.

Taken to its extreme, this situation leads to adjacent hostile kingdoms, an entirely unacceptable outcome, and a threat to the peace of the Society.

A certain barony is too powerful, or not powerful enough

The status or relative strength of any group within a region ought not to be a reason for either creating or of opposing the creation of a principality. Any such cases of inter-group jealousy or pity should be a matter of concern for the leadership of a kingdom.

Any Society group exists to serve the members of the Society who live in the area served by the group. No group is the exclusive property of its current membership, for it exists to serve the future membership within this geographic area, no less than its current membership. Thus it is the responsibility of the kingdom, and of all the leadership of the kingdom, to address serious deficiencies within its baronies.

Further, any principality ought to be created in order to better serve all of the members of the Society who live within its boundaries. A principality exists to serve its members, not its groups. Any principality formed with the intent to either bolster or restrain a barony will likely begin as either unapproachable or irrelevant to those not interested in playing at petty local politics. In neither case will this serve as an asset to our Society.

There is an additional point of importance, here. It is important not to underestimate the amount of work required to keep a principality that is a credit. While it is possible that a principality could be formed with an absolute minimum of effort, with no regalia, a skeletal set of generic laws, no awards or orders, and principality events on the order of

baronial events; such a principality would quickly become the butt of jokes from within and without the lands. In such a case, one is pressed to ask, “why bother with the principality?”

A principality that is to be a credit to its people and its kingdom requires work. An incredible initial effort, and a continuing commitment far in excess required by a region. And this leads to an obvious question, “who will perform this work?”

Often, though not always, the impetus for creation of a barony comes from within a large shire or barony in a region. In such a group, there is an abundance of hands willing to help and many people frequently find inadequate space in which to exercise their creative service. Small groups, on the other hand, usually dread the thought of either having tasks added to their plates, or of losing key volunteers to another task.

Thus, when pondering the creation of a principality it is wise to ask, “who will do the work?” The answer to this question often complicates any existing sensitivities around dominant baronies in an area.

For those who consider a barony to be under-recognized or somehow kept from its rightful place of importance in an area, a principality can be a road to baronial eminence. After all, it can be reasoned, small groups will be unlikely to supply principality officers, retinue, event sponsorship, Coronet contenders and court support, so that the barony will easily become the driving force within the principality.

Likewise, for those who believe a barony to be too powerful in an area, they might look to a principality with multiple baronies so that other forces (principality officers and coronets) from other baronies will have authority over the troublesome barony.

At this point, I believe it unnecessary to point out the limitations of creating a principality with these goals in mind.

A special person or couple really should be prince and princess

Seldom stated, this is sadly often a motivation behind the creation of a principality. Well meaning people (or inappropriately selfish ones) fantasize about how wonderfully a particular person, or couple would look on the thrones of a new principality.

While it is true that a number of people from the new principality will serve as Coronet, as with the Crown, the victors will be selected by tournament. It is often the case that those a majority of the principality believes ought to serve, will not win.

There is another, more devastating truth here. Even if the desired couple wins the coronet and successfully sits the throne, the principality is for a very long time. Who will be the second ruler, or the fifth, or the twentieth? It is often the case that the new principality does not have an adequate pool of fighters who are capable of ruling wisely.

In this unfortunate case, either the Coronet is handed back and forth among a small number of couples, or future Coronets will be an embarrassment to the principality and to the kingdom. Without an adequate base of fighters, and excluding those who wish to participate in Crown Tournament, and thus will not risk winning Coronet, the hot-head, the unchivalrous fighter, the racist, or the athlete who is new to the Society, will sit the

Coronet.

While it is usually the case that a critical mass of leadership within the kingdom can help moderate the effects of an unexpected and unprepared Crown Tournament winner, it is usually not the case that such a mass of experienced leadership is available within a new principality.

In Conclusion to the Second Part: Does the principality have the necessary resources?

This question has been touched in several parts, but let me make this concern explicit. The health and well being of our beloved Kingdom and the greater Society depend on an abundance of resources, freely given. If each kingdom possesses within itself resources only sufficient to maintain its needs, or needs which expand to fill the available resources; our Society will dissolve, lacking sufficient resources to provide necessary services to all of its members. Likewise, if the health of our kingdom is to be maintained, there must be an abundance of resources beyond those needed to support all of our branches, of whatever size, available to do the needed work.

Principalities require work. A principality which is a credit to its kingdom and a source of honor to its subjects requires great and continuing work. If the groups within an area of a kingdom wish to consider creation of a principality, these groups ought to be certain they possess adequate resources to both support their new principality, and to continue to bear their share of the responsibilities of administering the kingdom.

Thus the creation of a principality is of legitimate concern to those who live without proposed principality boundaries, and to a lesser part, to those who live without the kingdom. For if there are insufficient resources, including skilled leaders willing to serve, to support the increase of a new principality, resources previously available to the kingdom will be impressed into service for the principality and the other subjects of the kingdom will be required to increase their contributions, or suffer the degradation of the Crown. Further, in a kingdom not already wealthy with such resources, if insufficient leadership is available throughout the rest of the kingdom to cover the demand, that kingdom will contribute less to the leadership of the Society.

The kind reader will note that these leadership resources include the continued willingness to serve, so that if a loyal subject is able to serve for a limited period, should that period be used in service to the principality, it is not available to be applied towards the requirements of service for the kingdom or the Society. A wise Crown, and the Crown's wise advisors, will labor to ensure that those who serve are treated well, so that their service might be continuing and not limited. It is the abuse of the servant, not the difficulty of the task, which most often leads to the limits of service for a competent leader.

Examine your own experience: Under what circumstances do servants in your kingdom, principality or branch continue to serve after guilt, duty and honor are satisfied?

Part the third

in which I consider some concerns about the process of creating principalities, and how

the very path a people take infects the destination with good and bad qualities

Beginning the conversation

Perhaps the most critical point in creation of a principality occurs when the conversation first turns serious, when the first group of individuals in an area ask themselves “why not?” The importance of this moment rests on the reasons from which this question arise? Do not allow either the misdirected motives become established, and do not allow the legitimate motives of good people to be rebuked.

It is not the case, of course, that there will be agreement as to the desired end state of the principality, but often the wise person can, by listening intently to the concerns of those proposing a principality, uncover issues or concerns that ought to be addressed immediately. Thus, the wise person sees initial discussions of principality as a tool for improvement of the kingdom.

The wise see in each person met a teacher, the fool can only learn from teachers already understood. The greater the fool, the smaller the number of available teachers.

Early in the discussion is the best time to provide guidance to help mold people’s expectations of their principality. Realistic expectations established early may prevent heartache, disappointment and angry charges of deception later in the process.

Finally, it is early in the discussion that the tone of the pursuit will be established. If people who begin to discuss principalities are given permission, informally and nonverbally, by respected leaders, it is far less likely that these discussions will quickly turn angry. “A soft answer does turn away wrath.”

Potential concerns, stated in gentle terms such as “have we considered that it is possible that ...” expressed early, will be more likely to be gently received, contrarywise, these same concerns expressed late in the process will more likely be perceived as strategic obstacles.

Finally, it is important to involve a large number of potentially concerned individuals in the discussion, without the pressure to make some sort of decision. Establishing a principality represents a large change, and to those who are relatively comfortable with the present situation, change is threatening. Stewing wild game moderates the taste.

Formal beginnings

The process will proceed with less pain if the first official steps are slow and unhurried. In nearly every case, communicating a need to rush through such an important process will invite thinking people to suspect the motives, and to question the planning abilities of those behind the process.

It is nearly inconceivable that the process of creating a principality needs to occur within a restrictive time frame. If a region, for example, seems to be ready to create a principality now, but will likely be less ready in a few months, chances are good that the region is not ready to assume the long term responsibilities of a principality. Deep roots

and constant, consistent growth befit a principality better than does periods of rapid growth followed by stagnation or decay.

Ideally, the formal leadership in a region will be informally approached in the early stages. Any concerns can be carefully and conscientiously heard with little risk to the long term process. Safeguards can be established early.

Any groups or key leaders who respond with hesitation or hostility must be heard, patiently and with compassion. No principality can grow into prosperity if resentments and angers are to be found within its borders. And remember that when apparently stupid arguments are made by reasonable people, it is likely that the argument serves as a placeholder for some other, unspoken (and perhaps not even understood) concern, or that the listener is the one who just doesn't get it. With time, patience, and careful listening, both of these can be completely addressed.

It is wise to attend early to the language used. The foolish see language as mere labels for something real. Language is real, and the terms used to refer to key aspects of the process of establishing a principality ought to be negotiated early. Apparently obvious terms such as "consent" and "approval" and "polling" can, if used by various people in various ways, lead to much heartache and unnecessary disagreement later on.

Finally, part of the initial formal portion of the beginning of the process should include a clear commitment to a final decision act. This is important so that caring gentles feel a sense of safety, so that they might play with ideas, consider options, and listen to others' concerns without being surprised by an unexpected final decision. If we all know that no final decision will be made before a mailed polling, for example, then I will have the freedom to play with ideas and possibilities at least until I see that poll.

Intermediate steps

During the long process of developing an understanding of the principality's likely future form, it is wise to begin various groups of people on tasks that are simultaneously not necessarily tied to a principality, and which would be beneficial to a future principality. It is usually best to delay considerations of distinctly principality features, such as names, awards and devices, until formal approval is close.

However, many activities, such as the gathering of tales and songs telling of the region's history and unique contributions to the kingdom, the gradual introduction of regional events that are increasingly less tied to a particular group, and more to the region as a whole, and perhaps even regional fighting practices and arts and sciences faires or museums can be fruitfully begun.

Begin fostering a sense of intergroup cooperation wherever possible, seeking out opportunities to praise the contributions of gentles who attend other groups in the area. Baronies in particular, can work together to place an increasing emphasis on activities that require the efforts of those from several groups working together. Sometimes a regional contribution to the kingdom regalia can be a unifying factor. Look for ways to de-emphasize the exclusivity of baronial activities for this period of time.

Systematically identify and consult with all of the various subgroups of the region,

official or not. This may include the fraternity of fighters, merchants, guilds, major households, college of heralds, and dance practice groups. Be prepared to translate the impact of the creation of a principality on each of these groups, for these groups. For many, the effects may be subtle or even indistinguishable. For other groups, for example, the fighters, the effects may be profound. Again, listen carefully to concerns. This is an excellent opportunity for the leaders of the region to identify and address some long standing areas in the region that could be improved, with or without a principality.

Do not neglect consulting leaders from other areas of the kingdom.

This is a lot of work. Yet, if the region does not have the leadership capacity available to take on these tasks, it does not have the requisite level of available leadership to make the principality a viable thing.

Polling

Note, gentle reader, that I have still not mentioned any sort of polling. There are three major reasons you should not poll prematurely.

First, the focus of the work throughout these initial and intermediate stages is to listen to concerns, and to address these concerns in a non-threatening manner. During this time, your task should be that of listening, and of quiet addressing of the concerns that can be addressed, and perhaps the modification (or abandonment) of the plan for a principality should unassailable reasons be uncovered. As soon as a poll is administered, no matter how preliminary, you telegraph in a concrete manner your intention to move ahead. This argues strongly against your words of patient listening. And whenever words and actions do not strongly agree, the audience will believe the action, and if the difference is great, will believe the words to be those of a liar.

Second, do not tax the patience of your populace. There will surely be a poll, during the final stages of the establishment of a principality. You want no poll-fatigue that might contribute to some of the populace failing to respond to this most important poll. You also want to avoid any confusion as to which versions of which polls will really matter. If there is one poll, administered comprehensively at the ultimate point of the process, there will be no question as to which poll is the important poll.

Third, do not ask questions to which you do not want the answer. If you seek preliminary results in a poll, you will be expected to report the results of that poll. Yet if a poll is administered before your leadership has had the opportunity to speak to the populace throughout the region, a goodly number of the populace may answer “nay” to your questions, out of ignorance, confusion, or discomfort with a new idea representing unknown changes.

If you receive a preliminary poll result with a significant “no” response, these results are likely to discourage those working towards the dialog about the principality, and bolster the opposition of those who now see that their negative views are not a significant minority.

Conversely, if you receive a significant “yes” response, it is likely to motivate those opposed to the creation of a principality (especially those to whom you have not yet

listened) to quickly redouble their efforts so that they will not “lose” the final poll.

Further, there is nothing to gain in compelling individuals to express their opinion prematurely. It is much more difficult to persuade someone who has concerns about the principality of its merits before they have been forced to go on record as formally opposing the principality. When addressing complex issues, let ambiguity be your friend.

Final Stages

During the final stages of the creation of the principality, walk carefully, make it easy for your opponents to become your friends, and simplify.

In order to walk carefully, you should plan on regularly calling upon those with direct experience in the creation of other principalities, those kingdom officers who will need to approve pieces of the new structure, and those whose leadership will be critical to the early days of the principality to review and comment on all aspects of your new principality laws.

No matter how carefully you have nurtured a regional consensus there will be those who are uncomfortable, harbor doubts, or even who actively oppose the creation of the principality. These individuals are the most critical to the early success of your principality, for if they actively work against the principality’s success, they can do much damage. If they passively sit by as opportunities to improve the principality pass by, your new principality will be flirting with mediocrity. If they decide to lend their full efforts to your principality’s success, however, nothing shall stand before your combined might.

Thus, with complete disregard to any expression of doubt or opposition before the creation of the principality, and with no remembrance for any slight, intended or not, pursue each of your detractors with the zeal of a young person in love. Do not deprive them their rightful places of honor, grant upon them earned honors with all due solemnity, and call upon them to help with the principality’s great challenges.

Thirdly, simplify. Begin with the minimum roster of offices, and ensure that these are performed well. The eyes of the entire kingdom will be on your first officers. Ensure they fulfill their offices, and are adequately supplied with deputies and assistants.

Do not hold a garage sale to collect the principality’s first regalia. Begin with basics, and let them represent the best work of the principality’s finest craftspeople.

Establish a few awards, and pace the rate of additions to their numbers. Any award is known by those who bear it. Do not allow yourselves to cheapen your principality’s premier awards by giving them as candy.

Finally, resist the temptation to name any award or honor after a living person. This is to be done for two main reasons.

First, your first Prince and Princess will likely be beloved by the people. Make it easy for their successors to love them as well. Flushed with the wonders of a new principality, it will be difficult to restrain those who wish to name all sorts of awards for the first rulers. Yet why should one assume that the second rulers, or the fifth Prince and Princess, or the tenth Coronet will completely outshine the accomplishments of the first Prince and

Princess? If this proves to be the case, the only reasonable answer will be to strip the award of the first Coronet's name, and risk insulting these fine people, or to duplicate the award, with another name.

The second reason is more dangerous. It must not be the case that, once they step down, the original Prince and Princess retain the right to make principality awards. This honor and responsibility goes with the Coronet. Eventually, it is likely that someone displeasing to the namesakes will be given this honor. This creates an unflattering situation for all: Kathleen's Favour is now being worn by someone who does not respect (the now Viscountess) Kathleen.

In Conclusion

My words here are many. Thank you for your perseverance in continuing this text with me.

It is my sincere hope that these words will be understood with the seasonings with which they were prepared: the Rhetoric which allows good speakers to reveal truth; the Patience which allows Good to triumph over the expedient; the Care which allows the wise to avoid causing unnecessary hurt to others; and the Belief that all people are fundamentally Good. Thank you for allowing me to continue in service to you,

Gareth Tancred Wilfrith