



Shakespeare and Machiavelli (Studies in Renaissance Literature)

By John Roe

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Although the question of Machiavellian influence on Shakespeare has been thoroughly debated, this book represents the first attempt to compare the two authors in detail. The playwright and the political philosopher share a common ground, a fascination with the motives and morality of political action, which makes for remarkable similarities in their presentation of the subject. In his deploying of the argument, the author of *Il Principe* emerges as a dramatic writer, like his English counterpart. The book, while taking in an obvious "Machiavel" figure such as Richard III, considers Machiavelli in relation to Shakespeare's depiction of more conventionally noble princes such as Henry V, together with other monarchs from the Henriad - Richard II and Henry IV - as well as King John. Though the Shakespearean focus falls on the histories, tragic heroes such as Hamlet and Macbeth also receive attention. The study concludes with two chapters on the Roman plays and assesses Shakespeare's representation of the problem of conscience (Julius Caesar) and magnanimity (Antony and Cleopatra) in the light of Machiavelli's republicanism.

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Review

This is a fine book, uncluttered by jargon. It tells an important story from beginning to end. --Renaissance Quarterly

[A] fine work ... An important, useful, and engaging work for readers with a wide range of interests. --Sixteenth Century Journal

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About the Author

John Roe is Senior Lecturer at the University of York.

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