



Shakespeare, Politics, and Italy

Intertextuality on the Jacobean Stage

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Anglo-Italian Renaissance Studies



August 2009
252 pages
978-0-7546-6251-8

234 x 156 mm
Hardback
\$114.95

The use of Italian culture in the Jacobean theatre was never an isolated gesture. In considering the ideological repercussions of references to Italy in prominent works by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, Michael J. Redmond argues that early modern intertextuality was a dynamic process of allusion, quotation, and revision. Beyond any individual narrative source, Redmond foregrounds the fundamental role of Italian textual precedents in the staging of domestic anxieties about state crisis, nationalism, and court intrigue.

By focusing on the self-conscious, overt rehearsal of existing texts and genres, the book offers a new approach to the intertextual strategies of early modern English political drama. The pervasive circulation of Cinquecento political theorists like Machiavelli, Castiglione, and Guicciardini combined with recurrent English representations of Italy to ensure that the negotiation with previous writing formed an integral part of the dramatic agendas of period plays.

Contents

Introduction: the politics of intertextuality; 'You are better read than I': rereading the Italianate Englishman; 'And let them know that I am Machiavel': staging Italian political theory for the London audience; 'I have my dukedom got': Shakespeare and the evolution of the Italianate disguised ruler play; 'No more a Britain': James I, Jachimo, and the politics of xenophobia in Cymbeline; Bibliography; Index.

About the Author

Michael J. Redmond teaches at the University of Palermo, Italy and is a former Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Sussex, England. He has published several articles and book chapters on the cultural politics of intertextuality in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

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