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Discourses On Livy (Oxford World's Classics)



Niccolò Machiavelli
Discourses on Livy

OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



Synopsis

Discourses on Livy, written in 1531, is as essential to an understanding of Machiavelli as his famous treatise, *The Prince*. Equally controversial, it reveals his fundamental preference for a republican state. Comparing the practice of the ancient Romans with that of his contemporaries provided Machiavelli with a consistent point of view in all his works. Machiavelli's close analysis of Livy's history of Rome led him to advance his most original and outspoken view of politics--the belief that a healthy political body was characterized by social friction and conflict rather than by rigid stability. His discussion of conspiracies in *Discourses on Livy* is one of the most sophisticated treatments of archetypal political upheaval ever written. In an age of increasing political absolutism, Machiavelli's theories became a dangerous ideology. This new translation is richly annotated, providing the contemporary reader with sufficient historical, linguistic, and political information to understand and interpret the revolutionary affirmations Machiavelli made, based on the historical evidence he found in Livy.

About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

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Customer Reviews

The Discourses on Livy was perhaps Machiavelli's best work although not as famous as *The Prince*. The book revealed his fundamental preference for a republican state. Machiavelli consistently compared the practice of the ancient Romans to contemporary Italy. His republican theories were dangerous ideas during his lifetime. Based on historical evidence gleaned from Livy, Machiavelli's work was divided into three separate books: (1) decisions regarding the city of Rome, (2) the expansion of the empire, and (3) the preservation and protection of the Roman state. Machiavelli's comparisons of Rome to Florence were fascinating. The new translation of this book had hundreds of annotations which added historical and political information about Machiavelli's life time. Although the book was lengthy, Machiavelli divided his themes into smaller treatises of about two to three pages in length making it easier for the reader to analyze the content. Machiavelli was a witty writer who expressed his opinions in bold language.

Machiavelli goes into great historical detail and through great intellectual reasoning to present his arguments on how a Republic should be organized and run. It's rather easy to read, as Machiavelli has chaptered up this book into singular topics. Aiding in reading, this version has historical notes in the back to explain references Machiavelli makes about contemporary events that he does not go into detail on. This book has easily had more impact on my life and thinking than any other.

The Romans believed that they had reached the pinnacle of development & the success of their Empire at its height certainly testified to that view. However, Machiavelli points out the strengths & weaknesses of their Political, Moral & Philosophical stance, stating where these pillars of their society shifted & how they contributed to its demise.

Thoughtful and helpful Introduction, excellent Notes, and the husband-and-wife scholars who are the team translators did a subtle and, to an amateur, undetectable job of rendering period idioms into proper but more comprehensible language. It deserves its place in the Oxford World Classics series.

Machiavelli makes observations of what is to him ancient and contemporary events to analyze them and the reader will find many things that pertain today and will have a better understanding of what drives events.

Great edition by J.C. Bondanella and P. Bondanella. A must read for those who want to better understand Machiavelli.

As good a book as I had expected it to be. Would highly recommend it.

A good read! Relevant today!

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