



## **The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works**

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The Italian statesman and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli, well known as the author of *The Prince*, wrote not only grave, cold-blooded political tracts but also comedies, poems, fables, and letters that are seemingly lighthearted. What are we to make of the two extremes in Machiavelli's writings? This volume brings together outstanding scholars in the fields of literature, political science, and history to explore the meanings of Machiavelli's literary works, the light as well as the dark. Contemplating the comic and tragic in Machiavelli, the contributors offer new perspectives on his obsessions, intentions, and capabilities and reveal through sometimes opposing visions of their subject much about his political-historical treatises as well. The nine essays in the book consider nearly all of Machiavelli's literary and dramatic works, including the lively and ribald comedy *Mandragola*, the comic play *Clizia*, the ambivalent poem "The Ass," the symbolic *Florentine Histories*, and Machiavelli's fascinating correspondence. The contributors to the volume—among them Harvey C. Mansfield, Arlene W. Saxonhouse, Franco Fido, and Ronald L. Martinez—do not always resolve their opposing visions of the essentially tragic or comic Machiavelli, yet none contests the weight of his insights into the world and especially into the actors on the great stage of politics.

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