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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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

‘...a great author requires a careful translator; and it is befitting for Conaway Bondanella and Bondanella, in presenting a text translated from Italian to English, to assert that Machiavelli has been misunderstood because of poor translations.’ *Sixteenth Century Journal*

Niccolo di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469-1527) was an Italian diplomat, political philosopher, musician, poet and playwright. Julia Conaway Bondanella is Professor of Italian at Indiana University. Peter Bondanella is a Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Indiana University.

Fantastic. What a gem. The translation is excellent, easy to read, easy to follow. Sentences and thoughts they carry flow seamlessly. There is nothing prosaic about this book. As for the content, it is edifying. The name Machiavelli carries a stigma. We all know that and we can trace the origins of this undeserved label with very little effort on the internet, it is omnipresent. Looking through the shroud of negative propaganda we can discover a modern intellectual genius, *the founder of modern political science*. I use the word *modern* loosely since he died in 1527. I read Livy’s *The Early History of Rome* before I read *Discourses on Livy* so my opinion about this book might be different from someone who has not read Livy. To me, it is like seeing a movie after reading the book the movie was bases on. The wealth of background information makes reading *Discourses* that much more interesting. And it is a very interesting read. Political yes, but Machiavelli’s decorous arguments and reasoning based on examples from ancient history engage the reader in an insatiable desire to read more.

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.

The Oxford World’s Classics edition of Machiavelli’s *Discourses* is a scholarly yet accessible translation, with useful notes on Machiavelli’s sources and citations. The book itself is every bit as essential for an education in modern political thought as the *Prince* is. The work is in the same style, but longer and more (pardon the pun) discursive than the *Prince* is, but anyone who found the

shorter work interesting will find the Discourses rewarding, and each of Machiavelli's two great political works adds further dimensions to the other: they are best read together.

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.

If you want to understand what went wrong, or what should have been done instead, read this. It is also entertaining - humorous at times

Perhaps much better than 'The Prince' or Plato's works. See WSJ review

A good read! Relevant today!

great

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