



The Pragmatics of Early Modern Politics: Power and Kingship in Shakespeares History Plays (Costerus New)

Urszula Kizelbach

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Early modern kings adopted a new style of government, *Realpolitik*, as spelled out in Machiavelli's writings. Tudor monarchs, well aware of their questionable right to the throne, posed as great dissimulators, similarly to the modern prince who "must learn from the fox and the lion". This book paints a portrait of a successful politician according to early modern standards. Kingship is no longer understood as a divinely ordained institution, but is defined as goal-oriented policy-making, relying on conscious acting and the theatrical display of power. The volume offers an intriguing discussion on kingship in pragmatic terms, as the strategic face-saving behaviour of Shakespeare's kings. It also demonstrates how an efficient or inefficient management of the king's political face could decide his success or failure as a monarch, and how the Renaissance world of Shakespeare's history plays is combined with modern theories of communication, politeness and face.

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