



# Reading Revolution: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England

*Kevin Sharpe*

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## **Reading Revolution: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England** Kevin Sharpe

This fascinating book - the first comprehensive study of reading and politics in early modern England - examines how texts of that period were produced and disseminated and how readers interpreted and were influenced by them. Based on the voluminous reading notes of one gentleman, Sir William Drake, the book shows how readers formed radical social values and political ideas as they experienced civil war, revolution, republic and restoration. By analysing the strategies of Drake's reading practices, as well as those of several key contemporaries (including Jonson, Milton, and Clarendon), Kevin Sharpe demonstrates how reading in the rhetorical culture of Renaissance England was a political act. He explains how Drake, for example, by reading and rereading classical and humanist works of Tacitus, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and Bacon, became the advocate of dissimulation, intrigue, and realpolitik. Authority, Sharpe argues, was experienced, reviewed and criticized not only in the public forum but in the study, on the page and in the imagination of early modern readers.

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