

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

This book offers a fresh examination of key seventeenth-century writers in the context of their common interest in the republican, libertarian, and oppositional potential of the philosophical tradition of Stoicism. The Stoic ethos embraced several paradoxical moral and political concepts, notably “constancy” accompanied by a fascination with violence, “indifference” that mirrors extremities of anger, and “retirement” that involves quests for honor and authority. Indeed, Stoicism in England involved not actual withdrawal from society but an intense kind of literacy – reading and writing focused on Seneca, Tacitus, Lucan, and Lipsius as they could be seen to comment on contemporary political situations and ideological problems. Through subtly nuanced close readings of Marvell, Katherine Philips, and Milton, Andrew Shifflett shows that these writers had more in common than previous philosophical, political, and aesthetic categories have allowed, both in their keen Stoic interests and in the struggle to wrest this tradition from absolutist interpretations.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

STOICISM, POLITICS, AND LITERATURE
IN THE AGE OF MILTON

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

STOICISM, POLITICS, AND
LITERATURE IN THE
AGE OF MILTON

War and peace reconciled

ANDREW SHIFFLETT



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.orgInformation on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521592031

© Andrew Shifflett 1998

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1998

This digitally printed version 2008

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library**Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Shifflett, Andrew Eric, 1964–

Stoicism, politics, and literature in the age of Milton:
war and peace reconciled / Andrew Shifflett.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 59203 8 (hardback)

1. English literature – Early modern, 1500–1700 – History and criticism.
2. Politics and literature – Great Britain – History – 17th century.
3. Great Britain – History – Civil War, 1642–1649 – Literature and the war.
4. Great Britain – Politics and government – 1603–1714.
5. Milton, John, 1608–1674 – Contemporaries. 6. English literature – Classical influences. 7. Philosophy, Ancient, in literature.
8. Stoics in literature. 9. Peace in literature. 10. War in literature.
11. Stoics – Influence.

I. Title.

PR438.P65S53 1998

820.9'358–dc21 97-28830 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-59203-1 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-10114-1 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To the Memory of My Father
John Sterling Shifflett

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
Introduction	i
1 Conflict and constancy in seventeenth-century England	9
2 Andrew Marvell: the Stoicism of nature, war, and work	36
3 Katherine Philips: the Stoicism of hatred and forgiveness	75
4 Jonson, Marvell, Milton: the Stoicism of friendship and imitation	107
5 John Milton: the Stoicism of history and providence	129
<i>Notes</i>	155
<i>Index</i>	172

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Figures*

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | Seneca, <i>Workes</i> , trans. Lodge (London, 1620). From the copy in the Rare Book Collection, Wilson Library, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. | <i>page</i> 19 |
| 2 | Saavedrea, <i>Idea de un Principe Politico Christiano</i> (Milan, 1642). By permission of the Special Collections Library, Duke University. | 49 |
| 3 | Lucan, <i>De Bello Civili</i> (Amsterdam, 1658). From the copy in the Rare Book Collection, Wilson Library, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. | 85 |
| 4 | <i>Lucan's Pharsalia</i> , trans. May (London, 1627). By permission of the Thomas Cooper Library, the University of South Carolina. | 120 |
| 5 | <i>Plutarch's Lives</i> (London, 1683–86). By permission of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. | 134 |

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-10114-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

I have received many gifts in the course of writing this book. I am indebted to Princeton University for a University Fellowship from 1988 through 1992 and an additional Charlotte Elizabeth Procter Dissertation Fellowship in 1991–92; to the University of Cincinnati for a Charles Phelps Taft Postdoctoral Fellowship in 1994–95; and to the University of South Carolina for its continuing support of this and other projects. In the early stages of the writing I was guided by two justly admired scholars, Victoria Kahn and Earl Miner, whose keen criticism and common sense helped me both to finish a dissertation and to get a job. More recently I have benefited from the insights and encouragement of my friends Robert Epstein, Paula Loscocco, William Ostrem, and John Stevens, as well my new colleagues Lawrence Rhu and Philip Rollinson. Several seminar groups and conference audiences at Princeton University, the Modern Language Association Convention, the University of Cincinnati, and the University of Michigan-Dearborn have helped me to clarify my views. I also wish to thank the readers for Cambridge University Press for their detailed reports and, of course, Josie Dixon, who provided thoughtful assistance throughout the entire review and production processes. But my greatest debts in this and all other things are to my wife Audrey, to my mother Elizabeth, and to my late father John. “A benefit endures,” says Seneca, “even after that through which it was manifested has been lost; for it is a virtuous act, and no power can undo it.”

An earlier version of chapter 3 was published as “‘How Many Virtues Must I Hate’: Katherine Philips and the Politics of Clemency,” in *Studies in Philology* 94 (1997): 103–35. An earlier version of chapter 4 was published as “‘By *Lucan* Driv’n About’: A Jonsonian Marvell’s Lucanic Milton,” in *Renaissance Quarterly* 49 (1996): 803–23. I am grateful to the editors for permission to use work which originally appeared in their journals.