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978-0-521-59203-1 - Stoicism, Politics, and Literature in the Age of Milton: War and Peace Reconciled

Andrew Shifflett

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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.

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To the Memory of My Father
John Sterling Shifflett

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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.