



Richelieu and Reason of State (Princeton Legacy Library)

William Farr Church

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The problem of the relationship between moral principles and political necessity, of the purposes of power and the justice of means, has always been a central theme in European history. The ministry of Cardinal Richelieu is a focal point for the problem because it existed during a time when the continuing strength of religiously based political ideas and the growth of the modern state converged.

In this major study William F. Church examines Richelieu's policies, his efforts to justify them, and the extensive debates they occasioned. His conclusion, contrary to that of many earlier historians, is that the underlying ideology of the Cardinal's policies was strongly religious and opened the way to secularized reason of state to a very limited degree.

Originally published in 1973.

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