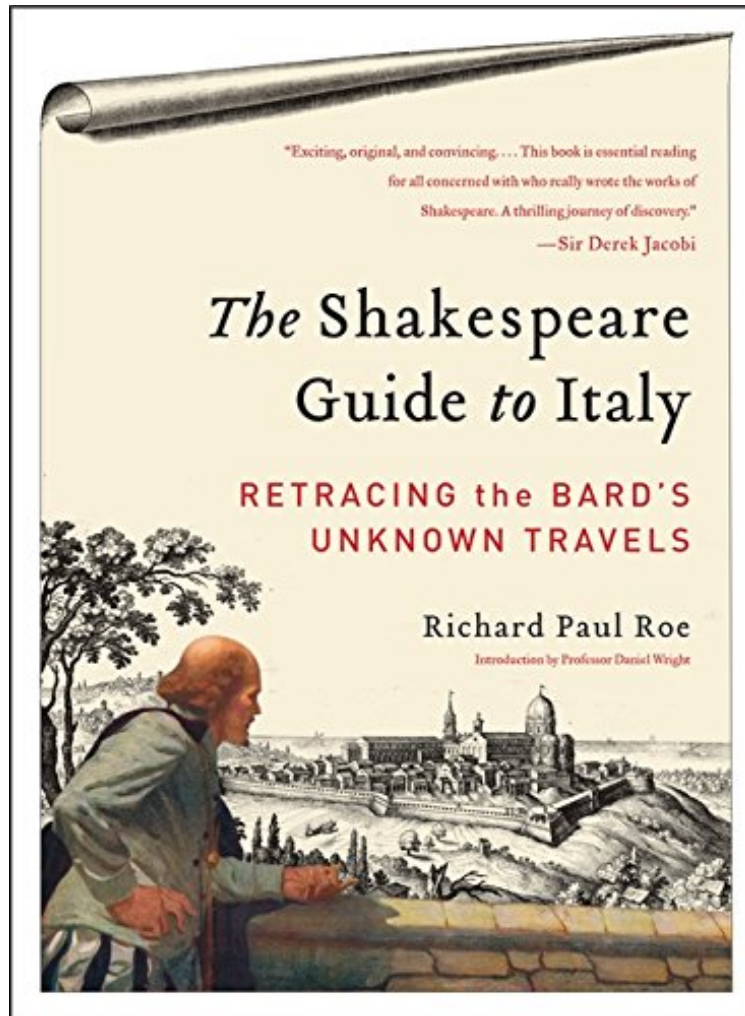


The Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Retracing the Bard's Unknown Travels

Richard Paul Roe

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Richard Paul Roe : The Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Retracing the Bard's Unknown Travels before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Shakespeare Guide to Italy: Retracing the Bard's Unknown Travels:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. This book is both beautiful and interestingBy Billy GayleThis book is both beautiful and interesting. The author includes many photos, maps, and drawings to explain the places to which he has gone. The author spent a lot of time looking for the places where the plays took place and explains how the author of the plays would not be privy to the details via second-hand information. It does not require that you read the book in its entirety all at once. You can read about the play in which you are interested and come back days or weeks

later to review another. Kudos to Mr. Roe for the time and research effort that went into making this book! It is a treasure! 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Makes me want to hop on a plane to Italy! By Andrea Matthews Whether you're an "Oxfordian" or not, this book brings to light information that puts a new slant on Shakespeare's knowledge of Italy as it shows up in his plays. What used to be thought of as errors in geography and excused as the author's imagination at work, is shown by Roe to be "insider knowledge" nearly lost to history as the geography itself was altered and history was forgotten. Really fascinating - and we're lucky to have this compendium at all, since Prof. Roe passed away not long after completing it, I gather. An inspired and inspiring piece of detective work and fun to read, too. 23 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Whoever Wrote 'Shakespeare' Loved Traveling Italy and So Will I By William J. Ray 'The Shakespeare Guide to Italy' is the most enjoyable book about the plays I have read and the most beautiful. It is a big book that opens up in the reader's hands and finds again, by word and photograph, the sixteenth century La Italia that is fixed in the amber of the Bard's descriptions. Richard P. Roe retraced 'Shakespeare's journey, which modern scholarship says, even hopes, never really happened. The prevailing view is that all was imagination. Roe proved it was true. He first came upon eternal Italy as a very young man on Army-Air-Force assignment to attack the Axis's oil refineries in Romania during World War II. The mortality rate was 80-90%. He survived. I wondered if the journey back to Italy was a metaphor in him of transcending time, to stand once more among lasting things. He saw the same places, buildings, rivers, voyage routes, and neighborhoods meticulously described by the author of the Shakespeare canon. They were still there. He made a study of the scattered geographical notes, off-hand descriptions, ships' names, abandoned wells, little churches, *impresa*, embedded in the Italian plays, which to most of us are an unlikely testament. Using old maps and paintings he re-constructed the topography of a dozen cities. This book is as much an aesthetic as a literary study, charmingly combined. The journey embodied an un verbalized faith that 'Shakespeare' did not fake fanciful lands and places-- he honored his travels on the earth as he did his songs and suffering, to express their truth. Roe's lasting contribution to scholarship will be that he proved 'Shakespeare' did not commit geographical or cultural error in the Mediterranean plays. Instead, he was uncannily accurate. The prodigious implication of this, which Roe never stated, not being a big talker, is that our entire conception of who 'Shakespeare' was must now change. The man from Stratford never left England. We agree on that. The author went to Italy and knew it well. Sycamore trees stand west of the city walls in Verona, mentioned in *Romeo and Juliet*. The grove of trees barely in sight beyond the *Porta Palio* has been reduced to copses, it is true, but they are there. You can see them through the arch. *Midsummer Night's Dream* had a neighborhood called 'Little Athens'. It still exists in Sabbioneta, not Greece. Shall we sail from Verona to Milan, as in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*? Laughable?-- today maybe it is--but by traveling overland to Ostiglia, they did it routinely, via the river Adda and canals. What about visiting the Bohemian coastline, near Trieste? Impossible now, but then Bohemia had thirty miles of access to the Gulf of Venice. Ben Jonson said 'Shakespeare' got it wrong. Jonson was wrong. He never left Western Europe. The author did. One finds the book full of long-buried gems, not only referenced in the works of Shakespeare and the medieval past, but also sustained in native knowledge, freely shared by the people Roe met as he searched back and forth in time. Contextual knowledge literally returns to life. Roe's search was buoyed by a certain relentless laconic pride. This man was a warrior. He didn't give up. The breadth of his spirit is expressed perhaps by a brief passage about how he searched for and found 'Shakespeare': "This is the playwright who is said to be ignorant of Italy. But truth is revealed in trifles, not in the great words that sweep. Truth hides in the words that are overlooked--the dull words, odd words, the words that are dismissed as cluttering, inconsequential, irrelevant. These are the words, not the soaring ones, that tell what a person knows. But one must listen." "There are many ghosts in Italy,'Shakespeare's and Roe's among them. Most highly recommended.

Equal parts literary detective story and vivid travelogue, *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* chronicles author Richard Paul Roe's thirty-year quest to find the locations in which Shakespeare set his ten Italian plays—delivering a text which will forever change our understanding of how to read the Bard of Avon and irrevocably alter our vision of who William Shakespeare really was. More than 150 full-color images illustrate and enhance Roe's captivating narrative, illuminating his lifelong journey and shining alight into the depths of Shakespeare's experiences in Italy. Until now, Shakespeare's use of Italian backdrops—*Romeo and Juliet*'s Verona, *Othello*'s Venice, *Much Ado About Nothing*'s Messina, to name a few—has been the source of controversy and conjecture. With *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy*, Roe's meticulous study reveals the secrets that have eluded scholars for centuries.

"A fascinating look at a largely untouched aspect of Shakespeare's identity and influences. Recommended for Shakespeare enthusiasts and scholars as well as travelers looking for a new perspective, this is also particularly intriguing as a companion to specific plays." (Library Journal (starred review)) "An exceptionally entertaining, enlightening, and handsome companion for a thrillingly literate Italian sojourn." (Booklist) "Exciting, original, and convincing.... This book is essential reading for all concerned with who really wrote the works of Shakespeare. A thrilling journey of discovery." (Sir Derek Jacobi) "This is a revolutionary and revelatory book, part thrilling detective story and part sober scholarly treatise." (Michael York, Shakespearean actor of stage and screen and co-author of *A*

Shakespearean Actor Prepares)“This represents a hugely significant intervention in the study of Shakespeare and his dramatic works.” (Dr. William Leahy, Head of the School of Arts, Shakespeare Authorship Studies, Brunel University)“Unless someone can prove him wrong, anyone who claims to have written the plays of Shakespeare needs to show some Italian travel documents.” (Mark Rylance, Founding Artistic Director, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, London)From the Back CoverRichard Paul Roe spent more than twenty years traveling the length and breadth of Italy on a literary quest of unparalleled significance.Using the text from Shakespeare’s ten “Italian Plays” as his only compass, Roe determined the exact locations of nearly every scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Tempest*, and the remaining dramas set in Italy. His chronicle of travel, analysis, and discovery paints with unprecedented clarity a picture of what the Bard must have experienced before penning his plays. Equal parts literary detective story and vivid travelogue—containing copious annotations and more than 150 maps, photographs, and paintings—*The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* is a unique, compelling, and deeply provocative journey that will forever change our understanding of how to read the Bard . . . and irrevocably alter our vision of who William Shakespeare really was.About the AuthorIn addition to executing a private legal practice for more than forty years, Richard Paul Roe undertook a lifelong study of Shakespeare’s Italian Plays. A recipient of degrees in English literature and European history from the University of California at Berkeley, as well as a juris doctor summa cum laude from the Southwestern University School of Law, he lived in Pasadena, California, until his death in 2010.