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The Portable Renaissance Reader



Synopsis

Essential passages from the works of more than 100 fifteenth- and sixteenth-century thinkers and writers, including Erasmus, Cervantes, Boccaccio, Montaigne, Bodin, Dürer, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Rabelais, Leonardo, Cellini, Copernicus, Galileo, Savonarola, Luther, and Calvin.

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Customer Reviews

There are an amazing number of pieces that are included in "The Portable Renaissance Reader." These works include letters from Boccaccio and Pope Pius II to Petrarch's poetry. Other writings, such as, "Self-Portrait of a Universal Man" by Leon Battista Alberti provides a thoughtful look into the notion of what defines a "Renaissance Man." Within its impressive volume, however, with the exception of St. Teresa of Avila, there lacks women writers of the period; yet the book not only covers a broad amount of material by Renaissance men, but there is also a biographical list of authors and a chronological table that is an asset for researchers who would like to go into further depth on the subject. Perhaps, an accurate summarization of this book is that it provides much information into what is still called "portable."

This book covers the landscape from about 1400 to 1600, focusing on the following major groups of writings: *Man* *Nature* *God* With excerpts from Galileo, Kepler, Erasmus, Pius II, Teresa of Avila, Luther, Di Vinci and many other lesser known writers of the age The writings provide a glimpse (and

little more) into the politics and philosophies of the times. Few of the writings, with the exception of some of the poetry, is complete, or even complete enough to dig in to in any depth. For instance, the excerpt from Cervantes Don Quixote is only 4 pages or so long. Having noted that limitation, the anthology is interesting enough, and will point the reader to other authors and works to dig deeper. The account of the election of Pius II alone is worth picking up a used copy of this book. An interesting anthology that provides a flavor of the age to the reader.

This book was ordered for my son for a college class he was in last year, but I have since taken it and added it to my collection and I've enjoyed picking it up now and then and reading selections. It's not something you need to read all at once, but you could place in your kitchen for when you are waiting for water to boil and you need something to occupy yourself...or when you are waiting for a phone call, and you have time to kill...all those moments when a long book won't do, but a selection from this textbook will satisfy.

Probably only of interest to three groups of people: 1: Historians 2: Writers 3: Nerds It will give you a good idea of how much language has shifted in the last couple centuries. You'll also get a feel for how the individual writers whose letters are included wrote and thought. My only serious complaint is a lack of explanatory text around each document like a short summary of 100 or less words and maybe a topic index.

The stories from the renaissance are full of color and drama and this book contains it all. A wonderful assortment of various authors from the time period! Highly recommend even if this isn't your thing. Never hurts to broaden your reading and experiences!

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