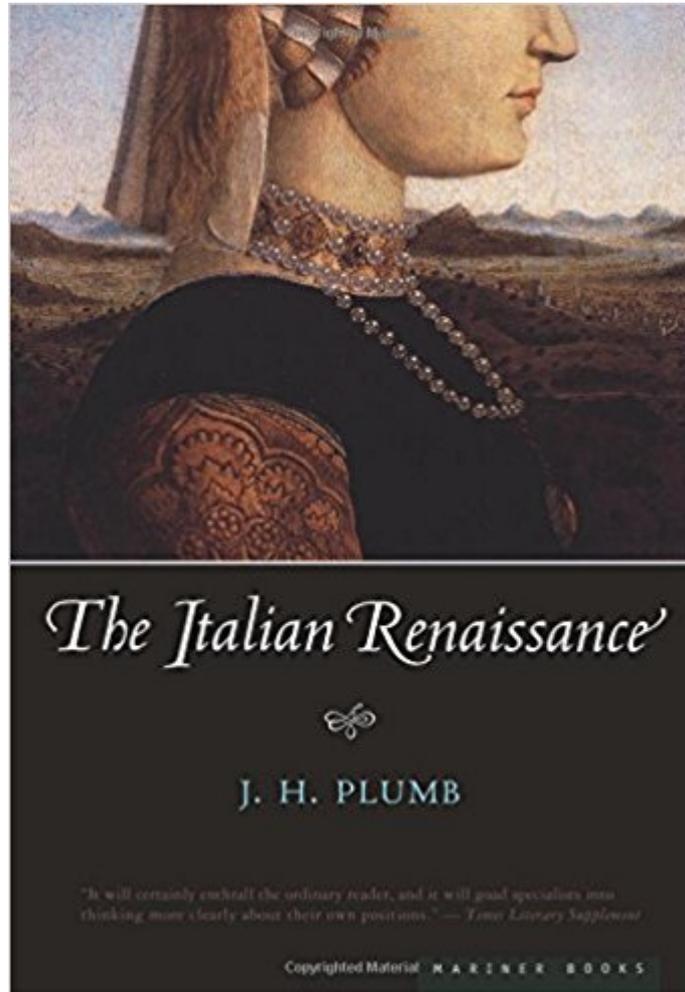


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# The Italian Renaissance



## Synopsis

Spanning an age that witnessed great achievements in the arts and sciences, this definitive overview of the Italian Renaissance will both captivate ordinary readers and challenge specialists. Dr. Plumb's impressive and provocative narrative is accompanied by contributions from leading historians, including Morris Bishop, J. Bronowski, Maria Bellonci, and many more, who have further illuminated the lives of some of the era's most unforgettable personalities, from Petrarch to Pope Pius II, Michelangelo to Isabella d'Este, Machiavelli to Leonardo. A highly readable and engaging volume, *THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE* is a perfect introduction to the movement that shaped the Western world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This narrative succeeds on two levels: it will genuinely enthrall the ordinary reader, and it will goad specialists into thinking more clearly about their own positions." (Times Literary Supplement) --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

JOHN HAROLD PLUMB who was born in 1911, graduated from the University of Leicester and received his Ph.D. from Christ's College in Cambridge. Plumb has written more than thirty books.

The Renaissance was a wonderful time for artists and scholars and a terrible time for ordinary Italian citizens. Paradoxically it was marked by an unparalleled flowering of art and scholarship, but also by petty wars and feuds conducted by ruthless princes and bloodthirsty condottieri. Histories of

the Renaissance tend to focus on the arts, and this book was no exception, although it also profiled some of the outstanding leaders and statesmen of Renaissance Italy. The Renaissance can rightly be said to be the beginning of modernity, and like most beginnings it is characterized by a certain exuberance and innocence, in contrast to the ominous grimness of the current modern era. The glory of Rome has long since perished, but the brilliant works of the Renaissance are still with us, a testimony that cultural achievements are more lasting than military and political achievements.

This is an general overview, adroitly penned by the main author and also several other historians. The renaissance was an explosion of knowledge and cultural development that still exerts a strong influence on the modern worldview. The authors roving summary shifts quickly from scene to scene and person to person, without dwelling overly long on any particular story. At times I wish he had expanded more on certain details and subplots; his writing whets the appetite. The overall effect is something of a jumble however, a mist, an impression of an age- that is enjoyably spiced with sordid anecdote and amusing turn of phrase. The second part of the book consists of brief biographies of important figures of the renaissance, very well written by different specialists in their topic. This to me contains some of the most enjoyable historical writing you could wish for, that really brings these people and the era they lived in back to life.

I love historical narratives, but this one is a bit long winded and dry for my taste. The facts are there, but you have to work sometimes through the drawn out prose to derive them and piece them together. This book was first published in the '60s and written by a Cambridge professor, and comes across as such. It makes a lot of assumptions about what you already understand of the Renaissance. In doing so it sometimes comes across as one academic talking to his peers. If you are well versed in Renaissance facts and players then this book may be a great supplement for you. If you are simply trying to learn more about that time and have relevant explanations of who's who, then you could get buried fairly easily in this book.

This is a great book for anyone with an interest in the Italian Renaissance. The book is divided into 2 parts, the first part being a general historical account, moving over subjects such as the arts, the princes, and so on, while the second part is a series of biographical portraits of important characters of the Italian Renaissance (written by various authors). The book is easy to read, easy to follow, packed with information, and I highly recommend it.

Herre is a work that goes back to antiquity explaining formal architecture and culture during the time of Christ, finally translated into the English language. It illustrates the way the great buildings of Italy and other parts of Europe were planned and constructed before and during the Renaissance period and has created in my mind an understanding of how the great buildings of ancient Rome were planned and constructed.

This is quite an excellent book. There is a number of intro chapters written by JH Plumb that are very good. Then there are more chapters on different notable people of the time. The one I enjoyed the most was the chapter on Petrarch. The author Morris Bishop wrote an eloquent chapter about a well researched and entertaining person of the time.

I have always been curious about how as humans, did we get to our present state of affairs. I purchased this book and it has been a good read so far. I have learned of the different struggles that the leaders of knowledge have endured in order to turn what they thought it was right, into the accepted idea for the general public.

good book

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