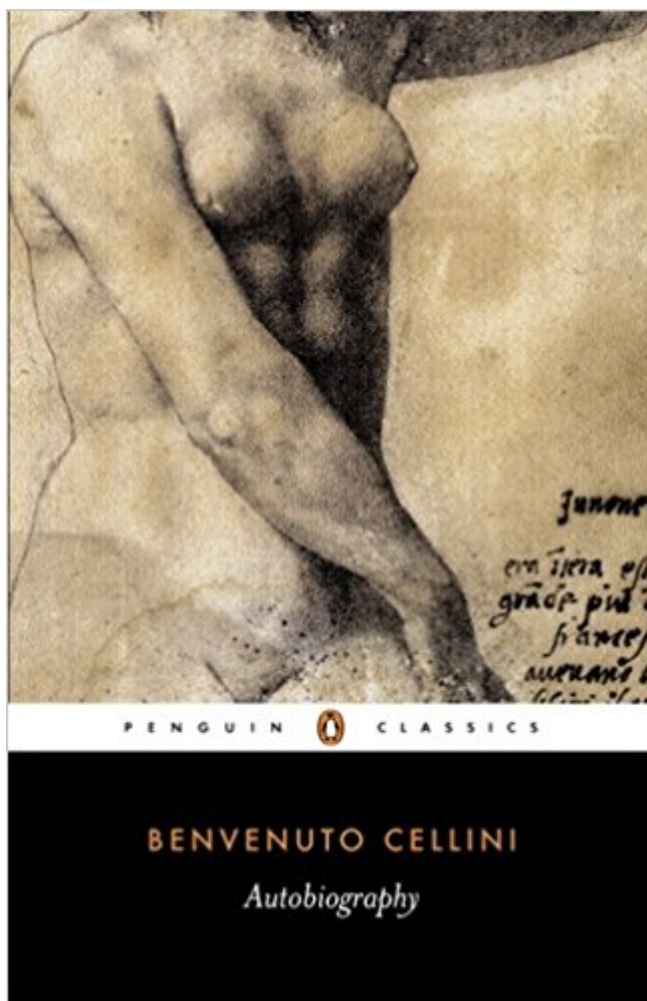


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The Autobiography Of Benvenuto Cellini (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Benvenuto Cellini was a celebrated Renaissance sculptor and goldsmith - a passionate craftsman who was admired and resented by the most powerful political and artistic personalities in sixteenth-century Florence, Rome and Paris. He was also a murderer and a braggart, a shameless adventurer who at different times experienced both papal persecution and imprisonment, and the adulation of the royal court. Inn-keepers and prostitutes, kings and cardinals, artists and soldiers rub shoulders in the pages of his notorious autobiography: a vivid portrait of the manners and morals of both the rulers of the day and of their subjects. Written with supreme powers of invective and an irrepressible sense of humour, this is an unrivalled glimpse into the palaces and prisons of the Italy of Michelangelo and the Medici. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Although most of Cellini's works in precious metals have been melted down, one surviving gold saltcellar, which he completed for Francois I of France, and a number of major sculptures have secured his reputation as one of the finest Italian artists in the generation after Michelangelo. But he

is most celebrated for his autobiography, which chronicles with unflagging energy and force one of the most tempestuous lives?and one of the largest egos?in all of history. Cellini served dukes, bishops, cardinals, and kings and queens of several nations, and he quarreled with them all, including two popes, one of whom, by Cellini's account, tried to murder him. He confesses to several murders himself, at least one rape, a notorious prison-break, innumerable fights and feuds. He also claims a pivotal role in defending Rome against invasion. From its first appearance in 1728 (150 years after his death), this portrait of a fanatical individualist helped define our notion of the Renaissance. The vigorous translation by John Addington Symonds (uncredited by the producer?a recurring fault) is superbly realized by British narrator Robert Whitfield, successfully bringing to tape Cellini's unforgettable story. Highly recommended for all collections.?Peter Josyph, New YorkCopyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Text: English, Italian (translation) --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Not the least fascinating aspect of this great autobiography is how incredibly picaresque it is, and swashbuckling. Just one sword fight after another, among other things. Even though it's fifty years earlier, this is recognizably the same Europe Don Quixote wanders through in Spain, and the same pre-modern world that Moll Flanders and Tom Jones later inhabit. If you think things seem too wild to believe in early novels, just read Cellini's life and you'll see that that's just the way things used to be. Steven Pinsker shocked people recently with a book arguing that history has actually gotten LESS violent over the centuries--a claim people obsessed with the 20thC's Great War, WWII, and the Holocaust, just for starters, found rather hard to credit. But if you read Cellini, you'll discover that modern violence is nothing compared to the nonstop violence and constant wars of the pre-modern world. The brutality, follies, and near madness of human life seem to have been with us always. Anyway, a great book.

Sculptor and goldsmith to Popes, Cardinals and Kings, Cellini pulls no punches in describing the villainous treachery and petty ways of the holier-than-thou crowd. Popes come off as easily influenced tyrants and Cardinals fare no better--just a bunch of scheming social climbers. No saint himself, Cellini goes to great pains in detailing the many travails he was put through by envious, jealous, less talented individuals in positions of power. A true Alpha Male before anyone thought of the term, Cellini is a lusty, robust rascal who suffers no slights or intimidations; of which there are a

never ending litany to keep him busy defending his honor. Murderous fights are not uncommon throughout the book and the action keeps the reader involved. Cellini knew Michelangelo and Vasari among many other of Italy's incredible wealth of talent and he has opinions and descriptions of all he came in contact with. This book is a must for any art lover or history buff.

An intriguing look into an artist's life in Renaissance Italy. Benvenuto one of the artistic masters of the Renaissance era . he will tell you all about his successes and failures . His patrons are sometimes unreliable and he feels under appreciated. His rivals are envious, jealous and almost always insulting. He is often driven to extreme measures to defend his reputation and honor. It is a fascinating story of the life of a fascinating man.

I first read this in an undergraduate humanities course. Cellini's exploits and narcissism seemed almost cartoonish, but his voice struck with me and I find myself reading this every year or two. Every time I confront his Life, I discover new delight and insight into renaissance Florence. I wore out my paperback edition and miss the photos and illustrations of his work. Kindle should investigate supporting the construction of a new edition with photos of his Perseus, the bust of Bandi, the salt cellar and other works with good provenance.

This book covers the eventful life of a passionate craftsman who lived through major events of the Renaissance. In Florence, Rome, and Paris, Cellini managed to gravitate to the most powerful political and artistic personalities, but his relationships with them were always bumpy. Cellini had an artist's temperament and more - his passionate temper and sense of righteousness, combined with the unscrupulous nature of many he encountered, caused constant friction and turmoil which make the book a nonstop and occasionally violent thriller. The book's one disappointment for those interested in history is the lack of extensive description of the places where he worked and travelled. It's centered on Cellini, his relationships and activities, and his craft. He does however have a great description of the defense of Rome in 1527, in which he was firing artillery from the top of Castel St.-Angelo. George Bull rates five stars for a great translation which captures the spirit of the original, its passion, wit, sarcasm, bitterness and insight. Given the work was written with Florentine colloquialisms, this is an achievement. Highly recommended.

This book gives an incredible peek into the everyday life of the exceptionally complicated, adventurous life of a renaissance soldier, goldsmith, painter, musician. I understand why it is truly

one of the top 10 autobiographies ever written. I could not put it down. If you are interested in the Renaissance, you have to read this book.

Benvenuto Cellini was a great sculptor of the 16th century. He was not, by trade, a writer, and his rough prose and sprawling narrative testify to that. But what he lacks in writing skill, he more than makes up for in personality, so much so that his brilliant life and gusto for living bursts through the awkward form. Cellini, it is clear, loves life -- he leaves nothing out when telling it, and so he represents very well what it must have been like to be one of the great artists of the Italian Renaissance in the patronage of the papacy, the great Medici family, and Francis I (who supported Da Vinci in his last years). We meet Lorenzo de Medici, Cosimo, Francis I, Cosimo's wife who needs Cellini to help her get a pearl necklace, competitors, thieves, Popes, and beautiful women, whom Cellini kept for modeling and for "company." And we get to hear Cellini discussing the design and creation of classic works that still exist today, like the salt cellar, the Nymph of Fontainebleau, and his masterpiece, the statue Perseus, which he describes as so astonishing to the people of the day that they composed sonnets about it and posted them up all over Florence. Cellini recounts his many affairs, duels, scrapes, imprisonments, and commissions, one adventure after another, so that his whole life sweeps by in a grand and vibrant portrait. He always seems to come out on top too, which makes you wonder if he's telling the whole truth, but nonetheless Cellini's autobiography is a thrilling read and filled with life in a time when all the world was stirring with art and passion.

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