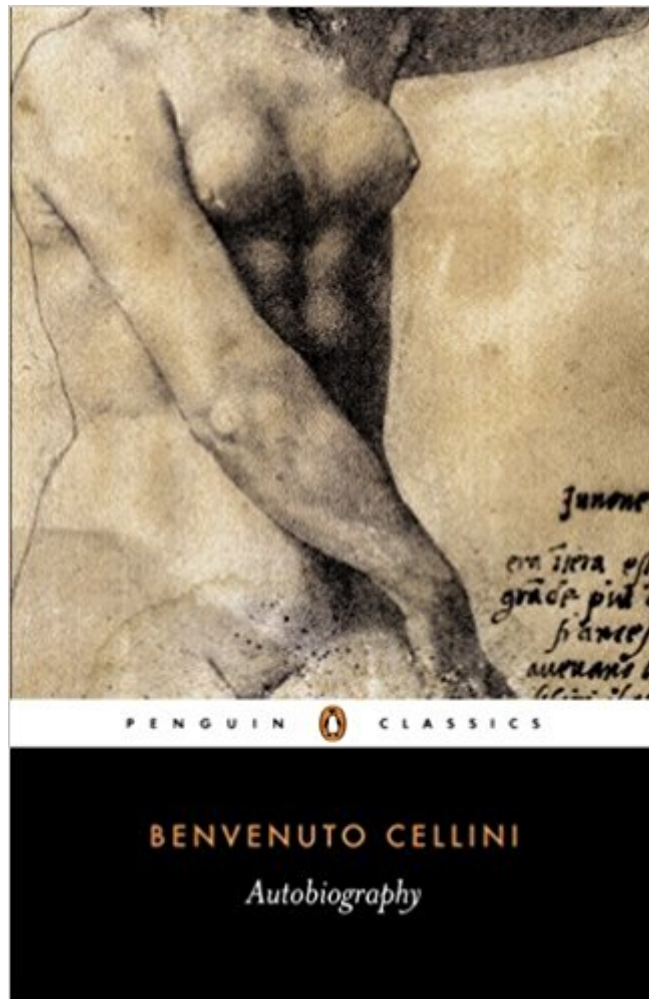


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The Autobiography Of Benvenuto Cellini (Penguin Classics)



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.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 465 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; Revised ed. edition (July 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140447180

ISBN-13: 978-0140447187

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.9 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (90 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #241,168 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Books > Biographies &

Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Italy #90 in Books > Arts & Photography > Sculpture >

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Customer Reviews

This book is about the Islamisation of the Middle East (primarily), North Africa, Persia and the Balkans and how Muslim apologists and their Western apologist allies have concealed the countless atrocities, oppression and forced conversions of conquered non-Muslims by "killing

history" (i.e. suppressing the truth and reinventing history). Before the author is accused of tarnishing Islam and the Muslim community, it must be emphasised that this book draws heavily from quotes from the Quran (the Holy Book which Muslims claim was given by God to Prophet Muhammad); the Hadith (i.e. a compilation of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad); and articles written by renowned Muslim historians, theologians and juristsall of which advocates war against unbelievers until finally all of the latter are subjugated and the harsh and humiliating treatment which must be meted out on unbelievers until they embrace the "One True Religion". The process of Islamisation can be broadly divided into 2 stages :1) JIHAD - This concept is not only embodied in the Quran but is an obligation of every able bodied Muslim man as a means to bring Islam to the unbelievers. The Prophet Muhammad fought 66 to 67 wars (all or almost all of which were offensive) during his lifetime against Jews and pagan Arabs. A number of his wives and concubines (i.e. Reihana, Safiya etc) were actually taken from Jewish tribes which he defeated or massacred (i.e. Banu Nadir, Banu Quraiza etc). In the first stage of Islamisation (i.e. the Jihad) Muslim armies conquered the whole of the Arabian peninsula and then onwards to the Middle East, North Africa and Persia by the 7th and early 8th centuries. Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians were given the choice of conversion to Islam, death or becoming a Dhimmi (i.e. tributary).

Bat Ye'or has done the world an immeasurable service with this very scholarly and sobering book on Islam and its Jihad and Dhimmitude against non-Muslims. We in the West, after having endured centuries of wars of religion, have come at last to accept the idea of tolerance of other religions. Islam, however, has an opposite credo: all non-Muslims live in "dar al-harb", the world of war; and Muslims mean this literally. The reader of this work must gird his loins as he learns of the persistent genocide throughout history of non-Muslims, which evil deeds go on even to this day (eg, against the Lebanese Christians). Of course, the same goes for Jews as well as all other non-Muslim religions. We learn from history here unveiled for Western eyes for the first time that, excepting only the Arabian Peninsula itself, the rest of the Middle East was originally (ie pre-Muhammed) non-Arab and pre-dominantly Christian, with large minorities of Jews as well as Zoroastrians, et al. These non-Muslim populations were brutally murdered (often with the women and children sold as slaves) and then the lands re-populated with Arab Muslims! This includes Palestine itself. The idea, then, that Palestinians have a "right" to this land, as they claim, is ipso facto absurd. It was originally Christian and Jewish land, then systematically and violently "de-populated" through Jihads, and then re-populated with Arab Muslims; and this occurred in the entire Middle East! That we are only now finding out about this sordid and tragic and unforgiveable history of unrelenting racial and

religious genocide is highly disturbing. And lest we think that this has stopped, read about the Muslims exterminating the Christian Armenians, millions of them, before and during WWI.

For all who enjoy the writing of Bat Ye'or, I will say that "The Decline of Eastern Christianity" is only a prelude to his new book (I've read a galley copy), "Eurabia", an examination of the European-Arabic anti-American/Jewish alliance. If "The Decline" presents a horrifying picture of the past, "Eurabia" projects a similar future for any non-Muslims unlucky enough to live within a Muslim society. If I hear another politician say, "Muslims are just like Methodists" (Bush) I am going berserk. Islam is NOT like any other modern religion in numerous respects. Nor, as the author points out, has it changed its fundamental beliefs and world view in the past 1300 years. It has, from its inception, spread through quite worldly methods - conquest, forced conversion and mass murder. Dhimmitude, that secondary status of all "infidels" within an Islamic society, has been and remains an integral part of the society. Byzantium was once a thriving culture, the original home of Christianity, the pathway between East and West. Yet, over hundreds of years those Christian areas - Turkey, Syria, Southern Europe, Southern Russia - became Muslim through sheer force. One should remember that this was state/church policy, not the decision of isolated kingpins. Muslims believe that subjugation, slavery and unequal treatment are not only allowable but moral if it furthers the faith. Thus, the question is viewed differently from the start. The writing is detailed, documented, researched. For the most part, the evidence comes from Muslim sources. If Islam has not exactly been open about its society (and it is strangely authoritarian in so many ways) it has not exactly covered up its past. No, it has celebrated the lack of diversity found in almost every Muslim country.

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