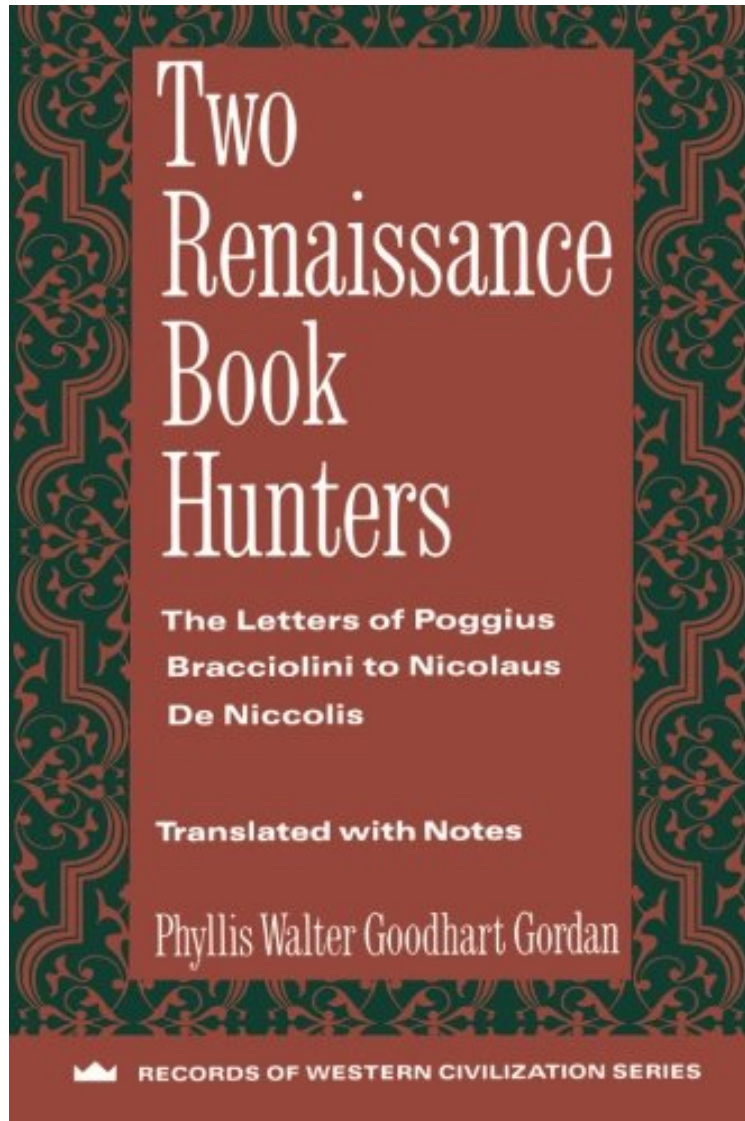


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Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus De Niccolis

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Swerve that narrates the story much better. 5 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Two Renaissance Book Hunters By Stephen J. Chow Besides being a fascinating collection of letters by Poggius, I was drawn in further by, and enjoy most, the nuggets of wisdom he often discloses to his correspondents. Here are a few: ON THE RARITY OF GOOD, DEVOUT MEN "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, and the nations are dedicated to belly and bed, and so swollen with pomp and pride that if a man does not worship the image of the beast, he is put to death. The principles of the good life they have turned into a mere display of rhetoric, and what merit they do not gain from their religious devotion, and their good behavior and holy living, they wish to gain through intimidation and pride and superstitious practices. As you write most correctly, if it were not that the words and deeds of our ancestors help us more than the dissolute example set by our contemporaries, through the examples we mentioned, Faith would undoubtedly perish. Our contemporaries know only one thing, that they can do everything for the sake of appetite and greed, to which they subordinate everybody. For very few fight for the Gospel, but many fight for their ease and their wealth" (p. 38). "For strength, as the Apostle says, is made perfect in weakness. John Chrysostom, whom I prefer to every other author that I ever read, when he was driven into exile from his church, said in a sermon to the people before his departure: 'Let the sea rage, let the floods sound in fury against me, etc., my heart shall not fear, for I stand upon a rock'; and that rock, as you know, is Christ. This too can be said of the Bishop of Bologna, whom, because of his holiness, the mob could not bear; and no wonder; for only the people who displease Christ please the world, as Jerome says in one of his letters" (p. 40). "The sacred books which I have read and which I am reading every day have cooled off my former interest in the Humanities, to which as you know I have been devoted since childhood. For the sources of these studies are vain and partly false and all worthless. But the source of sacred eloquence is truth and, when that is lost, we can hold nothing to its true course, we can accomplish nothing" (p. 49-50). "We must endeavor to make our reading about learned men and the precepts of the wise do us some good in life, so that, as the Apostle says, we shall not be revealed as mere hearers of the word but doers of it" (p. 111).

A reissue of the 1974 Columbia U. Press edition of the letters of Florentine humanist Poggius (1380-1459) to his friend de Niccolis regarding the rediscovery of lost classical texts. Translated (from the Latin) with notes by Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordon. Annotation copyright Book News, Inc. Portla

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