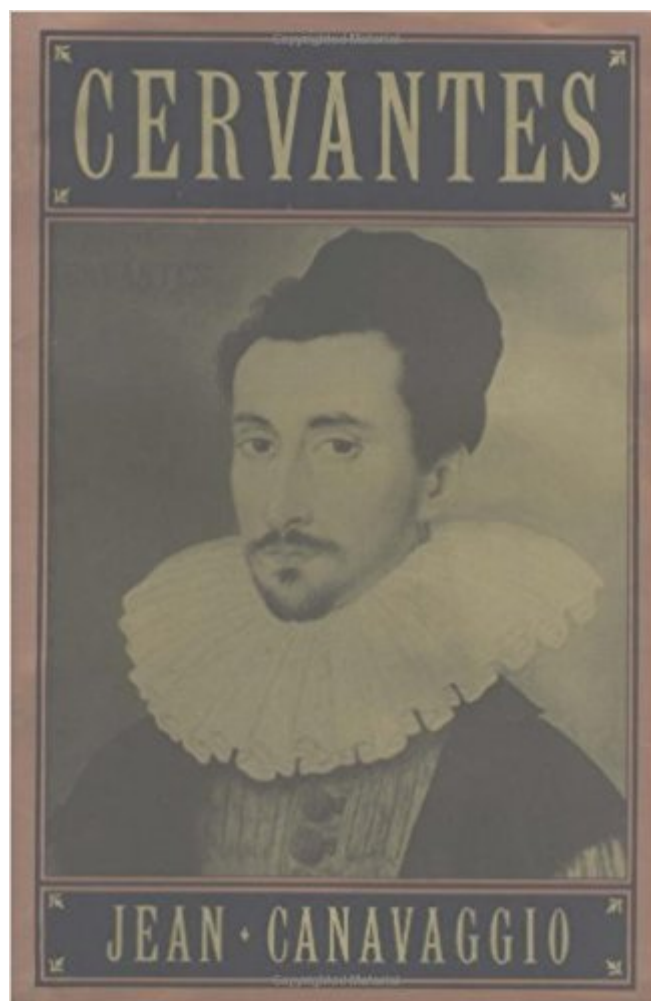


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Cervantes



Synopsis

Winner of the Prix Goncourt for biography in 1987 A study of the life of Cervantes, the author of Don Quixote. It traces his life as a soldier, as a tax collector, his time as a prisoner of war of the Turks, and finally the publication of Don Quixote in 1605.

Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1st edition (April 17, 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393028127

ISBN-13: 978-0393028126

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1.3 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #875,069 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #112 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Spain & Portugal](#) #461 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > Spanish & Portuguese](#) #4928 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Authors](#)

Customer Reviews

Little is known about the life of the father of the modern novel. Like his contemporary Shakespeare, Cervantes fascinates because he is approached most closely through his writings. Here a professor at the University of Caen, in Normandy, offers a collage-like portrait, separating what is certain about Cervantes from the imagined and the plausible, placing him into his milieu, Spain's Golden Age, in the effort to discover "that ever-present absentee whose unmistakable voice we always recognize among a thousand others." Unfortunately, much of the book is speculative, raising more questions than answers. Canavaggio mixes tenses, sometimes using the past, present and future in one paragraph; the prose, while exuberant, is rambling. This is an ambitious, adulatory biography. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

To the well-known biographical details of Don Quixote's creator--soldier, hero of Lepanto, prisoner of war, inept government worker, unhappy husband-- Canavaggio's popularized treatment offers no new discoveries. The author, a Cervantine specialist, eschews scholarly apparatus, the most glaring violation of which is the failure to follow up textual references with appropriate footnotes. The

English translation not only lacks the stylistic fluidity of the 1986 original, but also excludes the genealogical tables and maps as well. Libraries that already own Francisco Navarro y Ledesma's Cervantes: The Man and the Genius (LJ 1/1/73; o.p.) or William Byron's Cervantes: A Biography (LJ 9/15/78) may find themselves already sufficiently served.- Lawrence Olszewski, OCLC, Dublin, OhioCopyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The difficult history of Cervantes's life told in marvelous prose and based on data. Wonderful book.

Actually I lied about the plot and the mood and all because I couldn't otherwise review this book. I haven't finished it yet but I did want to renew my acquaintance with Cervantes, the author of one of the best books ever, Don Quixote. The book is informative and it was originally written in French but it's not a page-turner like Don Quixote is. It tells perhaps a bit more than I wanted to know about the family of the famous author but it's OK. The author obviously took a lot of time to meticulously research the subject. I guess full of surprises because I didn't know much about the family history of Sr. Cervantes; but otherwise pay no attention to those words behind that curtain.

Canavaggio is the most respected authority on Cervantes's life. His style is clear, and he does not make doubtful claims about the author--as we can find in other biographies.

This is by far the best biography ever written on Cervantes's life. It is admirable from all points of view: well written, well translated, superb research. It should be in the library of anyone who loves the author of Don Quixote. A gem.

so far, a terrific biography

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