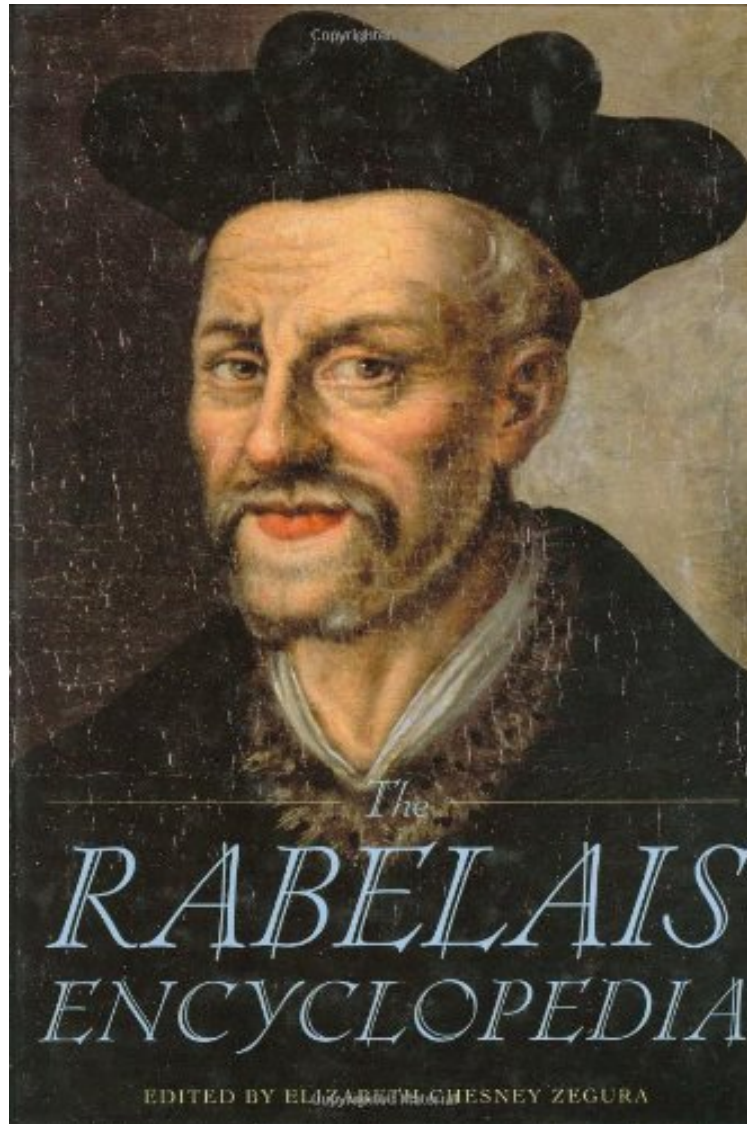


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The Rabelais Encyclopedia

Elizabeth C. Zegura

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Elizabeth C. Zegura : The Rabelais Encyclopedia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rabelais Encyclopedia:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. THE RABELAIS ENCYCLOPEDIA - A Remarkable Guidebook for a Protean AuthorBy Daniel B.Francois Rabelais (who ever calls him by his full name!) was one of the greatest writers of the French Renaissance, and the word "great" is always appropriate in referring to him and his magnum opus. In college I do not remember any of my literature teachers mentioning him but a History teacher, a priest like

Rabelais, mentioned him admiringly in a Renaissance/Reformation course. However, the heritage of Rabelais should be a literary one; he must be rescued from being just an historical reference point. The problem for readers is one of size. His book is just over one thousand pages: how do you begin? what kind of commitment does it require? His characters are so much larger than life, not just in physical dimensions, but in appetites, morality, expectations, et alia. And that all-purpose adjective: "Rabelaisian" - doesn't it block an accurate view of the book by its pervasiveness? I admit I have started this comic epic in scintillating prose three times! I did not lose interest; I enjoyed what I read on Monday and looked forward to Tuesday's installment, but come Thursday the book was idling on my desk. When I found, quite by accident, information about "The RABELAIS Encyclopedia" at this site, I realized that's exactly what I need - an informative, coherent, authoritative companion to the reading process. It's working! I finished the first section "Pantagruel" and I'm skipping ahead to "Gargantua". I keep the Encyclopedia close beside me, and consult it frequently for names, references, or Rabelaisian details and sometimes just to refresh my mind with the ordinary discourse of the contributors as a break from (what else?!) Rabelaisian rhetoric. I'm really delighted that I can finally say I'm not only reading one of great classics but I am intensely engaged in it, savoring it, relishing it, feeling the Rabelaisian energy, which is like no other, expanding my mind and body. This is an expensive book. Look for it in a library, browse thru it and you too may find it is the threshold you must pass through to enter this amazing universe which is "Gargantua and Pantagruel". Believe me: you should be here too! Let's wander together with the other Rabelaisian vagabonds!

The French humanist Rabelais (ca. 1483-1553) was the greatest French writer of the Renaissance and one of the most influential authors of all time. His *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, written in five books between 1532 and 1553, rivals the works of Shakespeare and Cervantes in terms of artistry, complexity of ideas and expression, and historical importance. Rabelais is read in numerous courses in French Literature, Renaissance Studies, and Western Civilization, and his writings continue to attract the attention of scholars and general readers alike. The first work of its kind, this encyclopedia is a comprehensive guide to his life and writings. Included are several hundred alphabetically arranged entries by expert contributors. These entries discuss his characters, his overt and veiled references to historical and Renaissance figures and events, his literary and philosophical allusions, his major themes, and the key events and influences that shaped his career. The entries cover such topics as education, religion, censors and censorship, humanism, death, and warfare. Entries cite works for further reading, and the encyclopedia closes with a selected, general bibliography.

"Zegura's encyclopedia condenses and organizes the vast critical literature about Rabelais' work and time. The encyclopedia is carefully constructed, clearly written, and well edited. More than 70 researchers around the world--established Rabelais scholars to newcomers--contribute articles of varying length on the characters, episodes, literary and philosophical movements, and political and religious figures of the time and the period's cultural manifestations in art, architecture, music, and printing. They also write concise introductions to some of the critical perspectives and methodologies scholars have used in approaching Rabelais' work....Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and higher."-Choice
Specialty college-level holdings on French literature or Renaissance history will find The Rabelais Encyclopedia a specialized yet important addition, providing in-depth coverage of five books written between 1532 and 1553 which rivaled the works of Shakespeare in their time. Rabelais is read in numerous courses on French literature and Renaissance history, so this will prove indispensable for such a collection."-Internet
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ELIZABETH CHESNEY ZEGURA is Associate Professor of French and Italian at the University of Arizona. Her previous books include *The Countervoyage of Rabelais and Ariosto* (1982) and *Rabelais Revisited* (1993).