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The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800 (Verso Classics)

Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin
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Lucien Febvre, Henri-Jean Martin : The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800 (Verso Classics) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800 (Verso Classics):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Scholarly, but dense, but scholarly
By Armando Fox
This book doesn't pretend to be other than what it is: a scholarly treatise on the impact of the whole printing ecosystem on universities, booksellers, venture capitalists (such as they were), governments, and the common man. As an academic myself, I'm ashamed that some of us seem to have the disease of writing in a way designed to make other people think we are clever, rather than designed to be readable. While many scholarly books suffer from that disease and are dense and musty to read, filled with overblown academic prose, this one is highly readable, even (especially?) in translation. This is a niche subject and this book has a niche audience -- people fascinated not only with how the spread of books influenced the spread of ideas, but how the technological and economic systems around printing affected almost every stratum of society. If you're part of that niche, you'll enjoy it. I wish it were available in Kindle form.
4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Not quite what I had in mind
By Richard Gibson
A thorough documentary of the ins and outs of the beginning of the book I was hoping for something with more of the 'why and what happened' nature. The book remains very readable and pertinent despite being written some time ago. However as a history buff I was hoping for more about the very beginning of the printing press which the author admits is very thinly documented. The printing press changed the world as the internet is doing today. It must have generated strong emotions on both sides of the issue of granting literacy to the world. I'm still looking.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. You are what you read
By RWordplay
The written word isn't going away. Prose may read from the commercial to poetic, we may read more package copy than works of literature, and more off a screen or monitor than printed on the page; but read we do and will continue to do. One could say that reading is as natural (and necessary) a function as breathing, eating or drinking; but, in fact, the book has a techno/economic/political origin. And, why not learn something of that origin? Just how did the book happen? Why? And, once the proverbial genie left the bottle, how did the book change everything? Things just don't happen. Dots are not just connected. Or are they? Febvre and Martin explain it all and with all its historical, political and economic implications. David Gerard translation is lucid and fluid and the book is a lovely read.

Books, and the printed word more generally, are aspects of modern life that are all too often taken for granted. Yet the emergence of the book was a process of immense historical importance and heralded the dawning of the epoch of modernity. In this much praised history of that process, Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin mesh together economic and technological history, sociology and anthropology, as well as the study of modes of consciousness, to root the development of the printed word in the changing social relations and ideological struggles of Western Europe.

It is one of the most exciting scholarly books ever written on printing ... This book is serious work marvellously rich and stimulating.
Hugh Trevor-Roper, The Sunday Times
It ranks easily among the most consequential works of recent French scholarship ... One can safely predict that the ever broadening implications of the work of Febvre and Martin will continue to occupy scholarly attention for many years to come.
Times Literary Supplement
Language Notes
Text: English (translation) Original Language: French
About the Author
Lucien Febvre, who died in 1956, was cofounder of the influential journal *Annales*, and is widely recognized as one of the foremost historians of the twentieth century.
Henri-Jean Martin is a distinguished historian of the development of early printing.