



## Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric

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# Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric

## Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric

Throughout the European Renaissance, authors famous and obscure debated the nature, goals, and value of rhetoric. In a host of treatises, handbooks, letters, and orations, written in both Latin and the vernacular, they attempted to assess the central role that rhetoric clearly played in their culture. Was rhetoric a valuable tool of legitimation for rulers or a dangerous instrument of resistance to political and religious authority? Would its employment maintain the social hierarchy or foster social mobility? Was rhetoric merely the art of lies or was it a means to arrive at the only form of truth available to human beings? In this fascinating volume, Wayne A. Rebhorn enables modern-day readers to follow Renaissance thinkers as they struggle with these and other crucial questions about rhetoric. Arranged chronologically, the twenty-five selections in this anthology, most of which have never before appeared in English, include key texts by Petrarch, Valla, Erasmus, Vives, Melanchthon, Ramus, Wilson, Amyot, and Bacon. All the selections have been fully annotated and have headnotes providing essential background information. In addition, the volume features a biographical glossary of frequently mentioned historical and mythological figures, a comprehensive index, and a detailed bibliography.

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