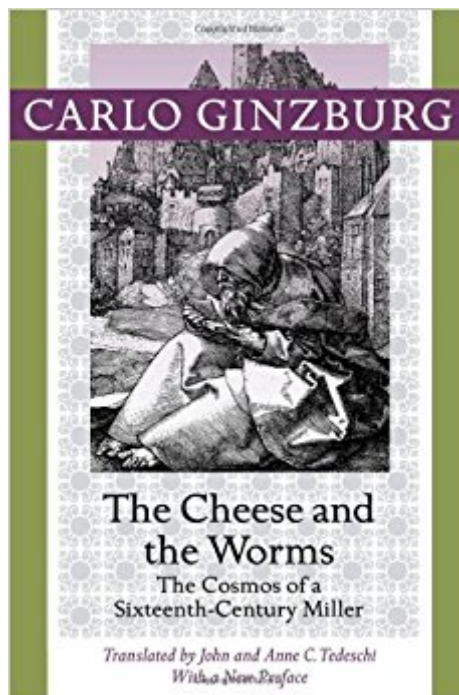




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The Cheese And The Worms: The Cosmos Of A Sixteenth-Century Miller



Synopsis

The Cheese and the Worms is an incisive study of popular culture in the sixteenth century as seen through the eyes of one man, the miller known as Menocchio, who was accused of heresy during the Inquisition and sentenced to death. Carlo Ginzburg uses the trial records to illustrate the religious and social conflicts of the society Menocchio lived in. For a common miller, Menocchio was surprisingly literate. In his trial testimony he made references to more than a dozen books, including the Bible, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Mandeville's *Travels*, and a "mysterious" book that may have been the Koran. And what he read he recast in terms familiar to him, as in his own version of the creation: "All was chaos, that is earth, air, water, and fire were mixed together; and of that bulk a mass formed—just as cheese is made out of milk—and worms appeared in it, and these were the angels." Ginzburg's influential book has been widely regarded as an early example of the analytic, case-oriented approach known as microhistory. In a thoughtful new preface, Ginzburg offers his own corollary to Menocchio's story as he considers the discrepancy between the intentions of the writer and what gets written. The Italian miller's story and Ginzburg's work continue to resonate with modern readers because they focus on how oral and written culture are inextricably linked. Menocchio's 500-year-old challenge to authority remains evocative and vital today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

By citing the original written notes of the miller's heresy trial I received a different impression of the inquisition. The proceedings were not based on torture. The protagonist was not a cleric and a

illiterate peasant, but a cleric and a well read peasant. The details of the daily life at the time add to the veracity of the tale

A formidable project executed with precision and sensitivity. I enjoyed this book for what it demonstrates as the complexity of a narrative and a (his)story. It also makes helpful arguments about how cultural memory, class, and intellectual history intersect.

It is a rigorous piece of research interpreted creatively in the late 60's but totally vital today. The writing is vibrant.

Classic micro historical look at Roman Inquisition through the eyes of court records and testimony of a rural miller in 16th century Italy. Fascinating and true!

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