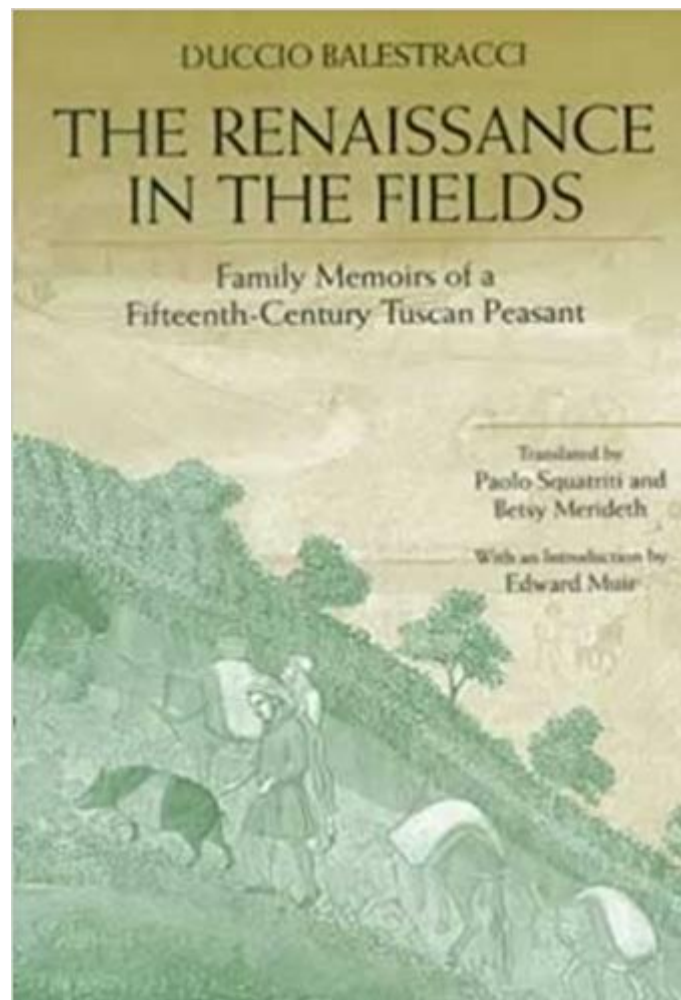




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# **The Renaissance In The Fields: Family Memoirs Of A Fifteenth-Century Tuscan Peasant**



## Synopsis

In the early 1980s, Duccio Balestracci discovered in a Sienese archive two account books kept from 1450 to 1502 by a Tuscan peasant named Benedetto del Massarizia. Benedetto knew how to read but not how to write. Infected by the urban habit of detailed personal record keeping, he asked various of his literate acquaintances to put into writing the details of his daily affairs. The resulting account books offer an unparalleled glimpse into the economic and social world of late medieval peasants. In *Renaissance in the Fields*, Balestracci uses these account books and a host of supporting archival records to explore the lives of Benedetto and his family over the course of the fifteenth century. In Benedetto we see how country people could organize land and capital and protect themselves, at least a little, from rapacious landlords and urban administrators. By capturing the changing realities of life in the countryside, *Renaissance in the Fields* offers the best introduction to how the peasant economy really worked, and to how most people actually lived during the Italian Renaissance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Creative historians are beginning to rediscover the world we have lost in most unusual and rewarding ways. In this book Duccio Balestracci has opened up for us an exciting and rich set of vistas on that world by showing us the nature of peasant life at the height of the Italian Renaissance.”  
—Guido Ruggiero, Penn State University

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Italian --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This book presents tons of fascinating information that I will glean for a project I'm working on set in a nearby part of Italy in 1460. Much has been written about the wealthy and powerful of this period -- after all, the ones in power often determines what is written down and what future generations will learn -- but this book offers a wealth of information about a class of people no less important or interesting. I'm very happy to have found this book.

Brand new like bought. Packaged in plastic wrap inside a sturdy envelope.

I've only skimmed this book so far, but it looks interesting and useful in connection with my own "research." As a matter of full disclosure, I'm not an academic researcher--just exploring background for a novel I'm writing. But if you enjoy reading about Renaissance Italy as much as I do, this book seems like essential reading. There's a wealth of material available that was written by merchants and dignitaries, but this book provides insight into the life of someone more "common."

If you've been to Tuscany, or are a Renaissance scholar, this will be thrilling to you. To me, neither of those things, not. It was enlightening, but it's not that well synthesized. I had problems converting old measures of land and money to new, for instance. But, I recommend it for a different slant on the Renaissance.

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