

**Francesc Eiximenis: An Anthology**

*Introduction and selection of texts by Xavier Renedo and David Guixeras*

Translated by Robert D. Hughes

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Francesc Eiximenis (1330 - 1409) was a Franciscan friar dedicated to the cause of education. This anthology of his writings gives a very interesting insight into the medieval attitude to learning, with sections on education in the home and at school, and on the importance of education to society as a whole. Leaving Barcelona as a young man he was educated at the Universities of Oxford, Toulouse and probably Paris, he returned to Spain as a preacher and author for the lay public using the vernacular language of Catalan. He had obviously read widely, quoting Latin philosophers and early church theologians, and is a great advocate of life in towns and cities, finding there the best opportunities for the flourishing of literate civilization. His advice ranges from parenting skills and marriage guidance, to which books nobles and citizens should read, down to how to blow one's nose in public. He displays the misogyny of the age in rehearsing the perceived shortcomings of women, but is nonetheless a staunch defender of education for women and girls, and indeed for all strata of society. His is a rough world that does not flinch at the prospect of corporal punishment, whether for children or lazy friars unwilling to rise for Matins, even if such a course of action is a last resort. But the desire for learning and the encouragement to self improvement are admirable even now.

*Nicholas Alan SSF*