

Book notice

Margaret C. Jacob (ed.): The scientific revolution: A brief history with documents. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010, xiii+153pp, \$17.95 PB

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Published online: 25 April 2013
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This book is part of *The Bedford Series in History and Culture*, which aims to provide a broad non-specialist audience with a taste of the primary material associated with well-known historical topics. In this case, Jacob compiles a variety of sources between 1543 and 1750 that are supposed to encapsulate the intellectual themes relevant to the Scientific Revolution. The challenge of providing primary material for such a vast and complex topic in just over 100 pages is considerable. The result is some very large gaps in the chronology and the exclusion of some sources that most historians of early modern science would consider essential for readers approaching the topic for the first time. Despite a preface stating Jacob's intent to provide a valuable sourcebook for students and instructors, the book contains very few sources that are not already easily accessible and an introduction with far too many wide-sweeping generalizations to be of use in the classroom. Additionally, Jacob's 'Questions for consideration' at the back of the book are not terribly challenging and the bibliography is rather brief. In sum, while specialists and their students would be better served in their inquiries with other textbooks and primary source readers, a non-specialist audience will certainly learn about the Scientific Revolution from this relatively inexpensive and accessible work.

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