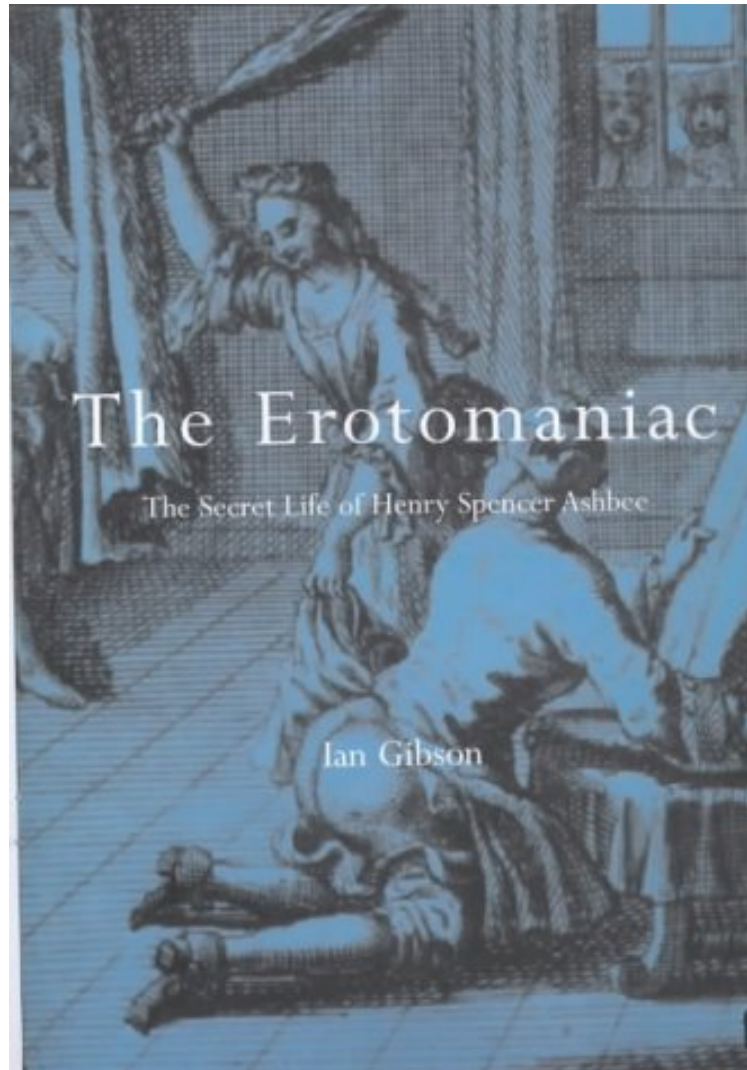


[Download] The Erotomaniac: The Secret Life of Henry Spencer Ashbee

The Erotomaniac: The Secret Life of Henry Spencer Ashbee

Ian Gibson

*audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#15347925 in Books 2001-05-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.18 x 1.18 x 5.44l, .0 #File Name: 0571196195256 pages | File size: 44.Mb

Ian Gibson : The Erotomaniac: The Secret Life of Henry Spencer Ashbee before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Erotomaniac: The Secret Life of Henry Spencer Ashbee:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. If You're Reading This, Buy The BookBy Chris WardFace it-- if you're reading a review of this book, you're knowledgable and interested enough to enjoy it. I'd guess that 1 out of 1000 readers might get a kick out of "The Erotomaniac," but if you read "My Secret Life" and wondered about who "Walter" was, or know who Gershon Legman is, or have a bibliographic bent, then this book is for you. Ashbee wasn't the most likable of men, but his utter obsession to collect and classify his erotica ruled his life, and the people he met

(including Richard Francis Burton, who comes off even more perverse than I'd imagined) make for a compelling narrative. I developed a great sympathy for him-- he was ruled by sex, but enslaved by his books. He could only share his fetish with a few other devotees, and had to hide his love for smut from his own family. If only he could have lived to see our century!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Discerning Customer
Very good
14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. On the Trail of a Great Pornographer
By Rob Hardy
The ongoing detection of the mysterious author of the huge erotic classic *My Secret Life* has advanced a step further (although the sources of information are only slightly better) by Ian Gibson, in *The Erotomaniac: The Secret Life of Henry Spencer Ashbee* (Da Capo Press). Ashbee had a Jekyll-and-Hyde existence as a successful London businessman, travel writer, and paterfamilias. He also tended his huge collection of pornography. It was so large a collection that he rented rooms in Gray's Inn especially to contain it (and perhaps to keep it from being a family concern). Ashbee was no supporter of the suffragettes, but he liked the idea that women took pleasure in sex and could actively participate in it, ideas that were unfashionable or obscene at the time. In his own writing, Ashbee railed that "the English nation possesses an ultra-squeamishness and hyper-prudery peculiar to itself." He was furious that missionaries were trying to intrude this morality into societies where sexuality was more open. It is clear that Ashbee's books ridicule these notions, even when Ashbee made it seem that he was supporting them. He is the author of three books, magnificently produced private editions cataloging his own books and those he was interested in. The titles give away his game: *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* ("Index of Books Worthy of Being Prohibited," mocking the Vatican's own catalogue, 1877), *Centuria Librorum Absconditorum* ("A Hundred Books Worthy of Being Hidden Away," 1879) and *Catena Librorum Tacendorum* ("String of Books Worthy of Being Silenced," 1885). Ashbee produced his volumes under his scatological penname Pisanus Fraxi; he seems to have enjoyed rebuses of his name, and Pisanus Fraxi is an anagram of the Latin words for "ash" and "bee." When it is known that Gibson has produced this biography after being allowed the first glance at Ashbee's diary, one might expect that there would be many personal revelations. Sadly, with some exceptions which Gibson quotes, the diary is discontinuous, and mostly dull. Ashbee was too busy reading and buying books to spend much time on a diary. If Gibson is to be believed, he spent a good deal of time writing *My Secret Life*, too. The final third of *The Erotomaniac* is an amusing list of correspondences of style, phraseology, and philosophy between the writings of Pisanus Fraxi and those of the "Walter" who wrote *My Secret Life*. Gibson allows that someday electronic scansion of the texts may make the identification more positive (and perhaps someone will pay literary sleuth Don Foster, of *Author Unknown*, to take the case). To me, the most compelling evidence is that Ashbee's volumes all have an obsessively inclusive index, just as "Walter's" book hilariously does. Under the gerund form of the most shocking verb in English, Walter has seven columns of entries, including: in masks / wheelbarrow fashion / modesty hinders complete pleasure / is the great humanizer / in a grotto / in cabs / in a church / in a calf shed / in a cow shed / against trees. On and on the list goes, a tribute to someone obsessed with sex, with lists, and with compilations. As Gibson says, if Ashbee didn't write it, who on Earth did? Gibson's own book, meticulously researched and genially entertaining, has just about as much of Ashbee as we will ever know, as well as genuine insights into Victorian times and morals.

The author has created a portrait of Ashbee, a man who happily supported his unsuspecting wife and four children, but spent his spare time cataloguing such risqué titles as "Miss Bellasis Birched for Thieving" and "The Marchioness' Amorous Pastimes". The work includes access to Ashbee's diaries.

'Here is the lust that dare not speak its name: Victoria may not have been amused; but I guarantee that you'll be.' Sunday Express '[A] gripping, finely researched jewel of a book.' Sunday Times
About the Author
Ian Gibson's celebrated biography Federico Garcia Lorca: A Life won the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. His biography of Salvador Dali was published in 1997 to much critical acclaim. He lives near Granada in southern Spain.