

The Borgias: Power and Fortune in the Italian Renaissance



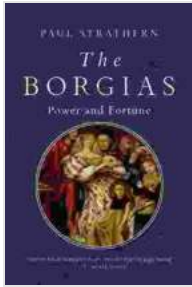
The Borgias: Power and Fortune (Italian Histories)

by Paul Strathern

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 53853 KB



Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 385 pages
Hardcover	: 320 pages
Item Weight	: 1.4 pounds
Dimensions	: 5.98 x 0.88 x 9.02 inches



The Borgias are one of the most infamous families in Italian history. Their rise to power in the 15th and 16th centuries was marked by ambition, intrigue, and violence. At the height of their power, the Borgias controlled much of central Italy, including the Papal States. However, their reign was short-lived, and the family was eventually destroyed by its own greed and ambition.

The Rise of the Borgias

The Borgia family originated in Spain. Rodrigo Borgia, the future Pope Alexander VI, was born in 1431. He studied law at the University of Bologna and quickly rose through the ranks of the Catholic Church. In 1492, he was elected Pope, taking the name Alexander VI.

Alexander VI was a controversial figure from the start. He was accused of nepotism, simony, and other crimes. However, he was also a skilled politician and diplomat, and he successfully expanded the power of the Papal States.

Alexander VI's children, Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia, were also ambitious and ruthless. Cesare was a military commander who conquered much of central Italy for his father. Lucrezia was married to a series of powerful men, and she used her influence to advance the family's interests.

The Borgias at the Height of Their Power

At the height of their power, the Borgias controlled a vast empire in central Italy. They ruled over the Papal States, as well as several other territories, including Romagna, Umbria, and the Duchy of Ferrara. The Borgias also had a strong influence in Naples and Florence.

The Borgias were known for their lavish lifestyle and their patronage of the arts. They commissioned some of the most famous works of art of the Renaissance, including Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" and Michelangelo's "Pietà."

The Downfall of the Borgias

The Borgias' reign was short-lived. Alexander VI died in 1503, and Cesare was killed in 1507. Lucrezia died in 1519. The Borgia family was eventually destroyed by its own greed and ambition.

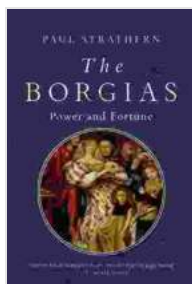
Alexander VI's death was a turning point in the family's fortunes. His successor, Pope Julius II, was a bitter enemy of the Borgias. Julius II stripped the family of its lands and titles, and he imprisoned Cesare.

Cesare eventually escaped from prison and fled to Spain. He was killed in battle in 1507. Lucrezia was married to a series of powerful men, but her marriages were unhappy. She died in 1519, at the age of 39.

The Legacy of the Borgias

The Borgias are still remembered as one of the most notorious families in Italian history. Their rise to power was marked by ambition, intrigue, and violence. Their reign was short-lived, and they were eventually destroyed by their own greed and ambition. However, the Borgias left behind a legacy of art and architecture that can still be seen today.

The Borgias are a fascinating and complex family. Their story is a cautionary tale about the dangers of ambition and greed. However, it is also a story of human resilience and creativity. The Borgias left behind a legacy of art and architecture that continues to inspire people today.



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