

Medici Godfathers Of The Renaissance

Meet the Medici family, who, in some ways, can be considered to be the godfathers of the Renaissance. They patronized Michelangelo, and Leonardo da Vinci, among many other famous artists.

From Jeanne Kalogridis, the bestselling author of *I, Mona Lisa* and *The Borgia Bride*, comes a new novel that tells the passionate story of a queen who loved not wisely . . . but all too well. Confidante of Nostradamus, scheming mother-in-law to Mary, Queen of Scots, and architect of the bloody St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Catherine de Medici is one of the most maligned monarchs in history. In her latest historical fiction, Jeanne Kalogridis tells Catherine's story—that of a tender young girl, destined to be a pawn in Machiavellian games. Born into one of Florence's most powerful families, Catherine was soon left a fabulously rich heiress by the early deaths of her parents. Violent conflict rent the city state and she found herself imprisoned and threatened by her family's enemies before finally being released and married off to the handsome Prince Henry of France. Overshadowed by her husband's mistress, the gorgeous, conniving Diane de Poitiers, and unable to bear children, Catherine resorted to the dark arts of sorcery to win Henry's love and enhance her fertility—for which she would pay a price. Against the lavish and decadent backdrop of the French court, and Catherine's blood-soaked visions of the future, Kalogridis reveals the great love and desire Catherine bore for her husband, Henry, and her stark determination to keep her sons on the throne.

Niccolo Machiavelli, one of the eminent minds of the Italian Renaissance, spent much of a long and active lifetime trying to determine and understand what exceptional qualities of human character-- and what surrounding elements of fortune, luck, and timing-- made great men great leaders successful in war and peace. In perhaps the liveliest book on Machiavelli in years, Michael A. Ledeen measures contemporary movers and doers against the timeless standards established by the great Renaissance writer. Titans of statecraft (Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterrand, Pope John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton); business and finance (Bill Gates); Wall Street and investing (Warren Buffett); the military (Colin Powell), and sports (Michael Jordan) are judged by Machiavelli's precepts on leadership and the proper use of power. The result is a wide-ranging and scintillating study that illuminates the thoughts of the Renaissance master and the actions of today's truly towering figures as well as the character-challenged pretenders to greatness. Here is an exceptional book on Machiavelli and his ultra-realistic exploration of human nature-- then and now.

"Cosimo de'Medici (1389-1464), the fabulously wealthy banker who became the leading citizen of Florence in the fifteenth century, spent lavishly as the city's most important patron of art and literature. This book is the first comprehensive examination of the whole body of works of art and architecture commissioned by Cosimo and his sons. By looking closely at this spectacular group of commissions, we gain an entirely new picture of their patron, and of the patron's point of view. Recurrent themes in the commissions - from Fra Angelico's San Marco altarpiece to the Medici palace - indicate the main interests to which Cosimo's patronage gave visual expression. Dale Kent offers new insights and perspectives on the individual objects comprising the Medici oeuvre by setting them within the context of civic and popular culture in early Renaissance Florence, and of Cosimo's life as the leader of the Medici lineage and the dominant force in the governing elite." "From the wealth of available documentation illuminating Cosimo de'Medici's life, the author considers how his own experience influenced his patronage; how the culture of Renaissance Florence provided a common idiom for the patron, his artists, and his audience; what he preferred and intended as a patron; and how focussing on his patronage of art alters the image of him that is based on his roles as banker and politician. Cosimo was as much a product as a shaper of Florentine society, Kent concludes. She identifies civic patriotism and devotion as the main themes of his oeuvre and argues that religious imperatives may well have been more important than political ones in shaping the art for which he was responsible and its reception."--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

The Medici are famous as the rulers of Florence at the high point of the Renaissance. Their power derived from the family bank, and this book tells the fascinating, frequently bloody story of the family and the dramatic development and collapse of their bank (from Cosimo who took it over in 1419 to his grandson Lorenzo the Magnificent who presided over its precipitous decline). The Medici faced two apparently insuperable problems: how did a banker deal with the fact that the Church regarded interest as a sin and had made it illegal? How in a small republic like Florence could he avoid having his wealth taken away by taxation? But the bank became indispensable to the Church. And the family completely subverted Florence's claims to being democratic. They ran the city. *Medici Money* explores a crucial moment in the passage from the Middle Ages to the Modern world, a moment when our own attitudes to money and morals were being formed. To read this book is to understand how much the Renaissance has to tell us about our own world. *Medici Money* is one of the launch titles in a new series, Atlas Books, edited by James Atlas. Atlas Books pairs fine writers with stories of the economic forces that have shaped the world, in a new genre - the business book as literature.

It was a dynasty with more wealth, passion, and power than the houses of Windsor, Kennedy, and Rockefeller combined. It shaped all of Europe and controlled politics, scientists, artists, and even popes, for three hundred years. It was the house of Medici, patrons of Botticelli, Michelangelo and Galileo, benefactors who turned Florence into a global power center, and then lost it all. The House of Medici picks up where Barbara Tuchman's *Hibbert* delves into the lives of the Medici family, whose legacy of increasing self-indulgence and sexual dalliance eventually led to its self-destruction. With twenty-four pages of black-and-white illustrations, this timeless saga is one of Quill's strongest-selling paperbacks.

History of the Vestey international financial empire; Ch.11, The Australian End, details the Vestey family's role in the NT pastoral industry since 1914; draws on Bleakley's 1929 Report and the Berndt's 1948 Report to outline conditions of Aborigines on Vestey properties; describes the Wave Hill strike and conditions on Gordon Downs Station in the Kimberleys.

The Borgia family have become a byword for evil. Corruption, incest, ruthless megalomania, avarice and vicious cruelty—all have been associated with their name. And yet, paradoxically, this family lived when the Renaissance was coming into its full flowering in Italy. Examples of infamy flourished alongside some of the finest art produced in western history. This is but one of several paradoxes associated with the Borgia family. For the family which produced corrupt popes, depraved princes and poisoners, would also produce a saint. Previously history has tended to condemn, or attempt in part to exonerate, this remarkable family. Yet in order to understand the Borgias, the Borgias must be related to their time, together with the world which enabled them to flourish. Within this context the Renaissance itself takes on a very different aspect. Was the corruption part of the creation, or vice versa? Would one have been possible without the other? The powerful forces which first played out in the amphitheatres of ancient Greece: hubris, incest, murder, rivalries and doomed families, treacheries of political power, twists of fate—they are all here. Along with the final, tragic downfall. All these elements are played out in full in the glorious and infamous history of the Borgia family.

A history of the modest family which rose to become one of the most powerful in Europe, this book is a remarkably modern story of power, money and ambition. Paul Strathern explores the rise and fall of the Medici family in Florence, as well as the Italian Renaissance which they did so much to sponsor.

A dazzling piece of Italian history of the infamous family that become one of the most powerful in Europe, weaving its history with Renaissance greats from Leonardo da Vinci to Galileo Against the background of an age which saw the rebirth of ancient and classical learning, *The Medici* is a remarkably modern story of power, money and ambition.

Strathern paints a vivid narrative of the dramatic rise and fall of the Medici family in Florence, as well as the Italian Renaissance which they did so much to sponsor and encourage. Strathern also follows the lives of many of the great Renaissance artists with whom the Medici had dealings, including Leonardo, Michelangelo and Donatello; as well as scientists like Galileo and Pico della Mirandola; and the fortunes of those members of the Medici family who achieved success away from Florence, including the two Medici popes and Catherine de' Médicis, who became Queen of France and played a major role in that country through three turbulent reigns. 'A great overview of one family's centuries-long role in changing the face of Europe' Irish Independent

The Year is 1500. Christopher Columbus, stripped of his title Admiral of the Ocean Seas, waits in chains in a Caribbean prison built under his orders, looking out at the colony that he founded, nurtured, and ruled for eight years. Less than a decade after discovering the New World, he has fallen into disgrace, accused by the royal court of being a liar, a secret Jew, and a foreigner who sought to steal the riches of the New World for himself. The tall, freckled explorer with the aquiline nose, whose flaming red hair long ago turned gray, passes his days in prayer and rumination, trying to ignore the waterfront gallows that are all too visible from his cell. And he plots for one great escape, one last voyage to the ends of the earth, one final chance to prove himself. What follows is one of history's most epic -- and forgotten -- adventures. Columbus himself would later claim that his fourth voyage was his greatest. It was without doubt his most treacherous. Of the four ships he led into the unknown, none returned. Columbus would face the worst storms a European explorer had ever encountered. He would battle to survive amid mutiny, war, and a shipwreck that left him stranded on a desert isle for almost a year. On his tail were his enemies, sent from Europe to track him down. In front of him: the unknown. Martin Dugard's thrilling account of this final voyage brings Columbus to life as never before--adventurer, businessman, father, lover, tyrant, and hero.

One of the world's leading historians of Renaissance Italy brings to life here the vibrant--and violent--society of fifteenth-century Florence. His disturbing narrative opens up an entire culture, revealing the dark side of Renaissance man and politician Lorenzo de' Medici. On a Sunday in April 1478, assassins attacked Lorenzo and his brother as they attended Mass in the cathedral of Florence. Lorenzo scrambled to safety as Giuliano bled to death on the cathedral floor. April Blood moves outward in time and space from that murderous event, unfolding a story of tangled passions, ambition, treachery, and revenge. The conspiracy was led by one of the city's most noble clans, the Pazzi, financiers who feared and resented the Medici's swaggering new role as political bosses--but the web of intrigue spread through all of Italy. Bankers, mercenaries, the Duke of Urbino, the King of Naples, and Pope Sixtus IV entered secretly into the plot. Florence was plunged into a peninsular war, and Lorenzo was soon fighting for his own and his family's survival. The failed assassination doomed the Pazzi. Medici revenge was swift and brutal--plotters were hanged or beheaded, innocents were hacked to pieces, and bodies were put out to dangle from the windows of the government palace. All remaining members of the larger Pazzi clan were forced to change their surname, and every public sign or symbol of the family was expunged or destroyed. April Blood offers us a fresh portrait of Renaissance Florence, where dazzling artistic achievements went side by side with violence, craft, and bare-knuckle politics. At the center of the canvas is the figure of Lorenzo the Magnificent--poet, statesman, connoisseur, patron of the arts, and ruthless "boss of bosses." This extraordinarily vivid account of a turning point in the Italian Renaissance is bound to become a lasting work of history. Leonardo da Vinci, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Cesare Borgia—three iconic figures whose intersecting lives provide the basis for this astonishing work of narrative history. They could not have been more different, and they would meet only for a short time in 1502, but the events that transpired when they did would significantly alter each man's perceptions—and the course of Western history. In 1502, Italy was riven by conflict, with the city of Florence as the ultimate prize. Machiavelli, the consummate political manipulator, attempted to placate the savage Borgia by volunteering Leonardo to be Borgia's chief military engineer. That autumn, the three men embarked together on a brief, perilous, and fateful journey through the mountains, remote villages, and hill towns of the Italian Romagna—the details of which were revealed in Machiavelli's frequent dispatches and Leonardo's meticulous notebooks. Superbly written and thoroughly researched, *The Artist, the Philosopher, and the Warrior* is a work of narrative genius—whose subject is the nature of genius itself.

"The first English translation of the complete literary works of Lorenzo de' Medici (1 January 1449-9 April 1492), Italian statesman and ruler of the Florentine Republic during the Italian Renaissance. Comprises love poems, comic poems, short stories, and philosophical and devotional works, including one play"--

The papacy has often resembled a secular European monarchy more than a divinely inspired institution. Roman pontiffs bestowed great wealth on their families and forged strategic alliances with other powerful families to increase their power. Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), for example, forced his daughter Lucrezia into a series of marriages for political reasons. When her marital alliance was no longer advantageous, as was the case in her second marriage, her husband was brutally murdered. Many papal families also intermarried in hopes of forming a hereditary papacy; at least two members of the Fieschi, Piccolomini, Della Rovere, and Medici families served as pope. Papal families since the early history of the church are fully covered in this comprehensive work. Genealogical charts graphically show the descendants of the popes, presenting in many cases the interrelationships between the papal families and their relationships with many of the leading families of Europe. Detailed histories examine the impact of the papacy on each pope's family and how each influenced the history of the church.

The companion website to the PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) programme broadcast in 2004. Contains an overview of the series, timeline, gallery, a "behind the show" segment, a tour of Florence, and links to more resources.

An ancient mystery. A conspiracy of silence. A secret to kill for. In the crypt of the Medici Chapel in Florence, scientist Edie Granger, and her uncle, Carlin Mackenzie, are examining the mummified remains of one of the most powerful families in Renaissance Italy. The embalmers have done their work well in terms of outward appearance. But under the crisp skin, the organs have shrivelled to a fraction of their original

size, which means it is difficult to gather usable DNA samples. Edie and Mackenzie both have serious doubts about the true identity of at least two of the 500-year-old bodies. And no one can explain the presence of an alien object discovered resting against Cosimo di Medici's spine. For Carlin Mackenzie, this is the most fascinating and the most dangerous discovery of his life. For Edie, it is the beginning of an obsessive, life-threatening quest. The Medici Secret meshes past and present, cryptic clues and constant menace to produce a mystery thriller that does not relax its grip for one single moment.

A fresh telling of the rise and fall of the House of Medici, the family that dominated political and cultural life in Florence for three centuries. Having founded the bank that became the most powerful in Europe in the fifteenth century, the Medici gained massive political power in Florence, raising the city to a peak of cultural achievement and becoming its hereditary dukes. Among their number were no fewer than three popes and a powerful and influential queen of France. Their influence brought about an explosion of Florentine art and architecture. Michelangelo, Donatello, Fra Angelico, and Leonardo were among the artists with whom they were socialized and patronized. Thus runs the "accepted view" of the Medici. However, Mary Hollingsworth argues that the idea that the Medici were enlightened rulers of the Renaissance is a fiction that has now acquired the status of historical fact. In truth, the Medici were as devious and immoral as the Borgias--tyrants loathed in the city they illegally made their own. In this dynamic new history, Hollingsworth argues that past narratives have focused on a sanitized and fictitious view of the Medici--wise rulers, enlightened patrons of the arts, and fathers of the Renaissance--but that in fact their past was reinvented in the sixteenth century, mythologized by later generations of Medici who used this as a central prop for their legacy. Hollingsworth's revelatory re-telling of the story of the family Medici brings a fresh and exhilarating new perspective to the story behind the most powerful family of the Italian Renaissance.

This book is as captivating as the city itself. Hibbert's gift is weaving political, social and art history into an elegantly readable and marvellously lively whole. The author's book on Florence will also be at once a history and a guide book and will be enhanced by splendid photographs and illustrations and line drawings which will describe all the buildings and treasures of the city.

Spanning four centuries, "The Medici" is the story of the astonishing rise and fall of one of the most extraordinary and influential families in the history of Europe - Following their fortunes from lowly beginnings to the rise of their banking network and political ascendancy, and on to their decline, this is a magnificent tale of ambition and honour, power and patronage.

This colorful history of a powerful family brings the world they lived in—the glittering Rome of the Italian Renaissance—to life. The name Borgia is synonymous with the corruption, nepotism, and greed that were rife in Renaissance Italy. The powerful, voracious Rodrigo Borgia, better known to history as Pope Alexander VI, was the central figure of the dynasty. Two of his seven papal offspring also rose to power and fame—Lucrezia Borgia, his daughter, whose husband was famously murdered by her brother, and that brother, Cesare, who inspired Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Notorious for seizing power, wealth, land, and titles through bribery, marriage, and murder, the dynasty's dramatic rise from its Spanish roots to its occupation of the highest position in Renaissance society forms a gripping tale. From the author of *The Rise and Fall of the House of Medici* and other acclaimed works, *The Borgias and Their Enemies* is "a fascinating read" (*Library Journal*).

Ever-loyal Maddalena, a diminutive, blue-eyed, black slave, has borne Cosimo de' Medici a son and seen him rise to the position of cardinal. Now, late in life, she finds herself committed to a convent, as part of a scheme to protect the Medici bank from ruin by Cosimo's sons, by hiding a fortune in gold for Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo, to inherit. But as the months go by, and the gold does not appear, her faith in Cosimo begins to wane, and with it, her confidence in her own worth. Has she been duped? Approaching old age, she finds in the abbess a confessor, which enables her to share her true story and perhaps, at the same time, convince herself that her life has been worthwhile. But the abbess, too, has objectives of her own, and the two of them may not be on the same side. Edward Charles presents us here with the intrigue, glamour, wealth, and deception of fifteenth-century Florence. One woman's devotion forms the foundation upon which the famed Medici bank was built. The largest and most respected financial institution in Europe in its prime, it came to represent the might of the influential Medici clan, a family of great power, borne of Italy's gold; a family who scaled the very heights of human grandeur but was to suffer through one of the most catastrophic financial crashes of early banking. Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Arcade, Yucca, and Good Books imprints, are proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in fiction—novels, novellas, political and medical thrillers, comedy, satire, historical fiction, romance, erotic and love stories, mystery, classic literature, folklore and mythology, literary classics including Shakespeare, Dumas, Wilde, Cather, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a *New York Times* bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

A sweeping and magisterial four-hundred-year history of both the city and the people who gave birth to the Renaissance. Between the birth of Dante in 1265 and the death of Galileo in 1642, something happened that transformed the entire culture of western civilization. Painting, sculpture, and architecture would all visibly change in such a striking fashion that there could be no going back on what had taken place. Likewise, the thought and self-conception of humanity would take on a completely new aspect. Sciences would be born—or emerge in an entirely new guise. The ideas that broke this mold began, and continued to flourish, in the city of Florence in northern central Italy. These ideas, which placed an increasing emphasis on the development of our common humanity—rather than other-worldly spirituality—coalesced in what came to be known as humanism. This philosophy and its new ideas would eventually spread across Italy, yet wherever they took hold they would retain an element essential to their origin. And as they spread further across Europe, this element would remain. Transformations of human culture throughout western history have remained indelibly stamped by their origins. The Reformation would always retain something of central and northern Germany. The Industrial Revolution soon outgrew its British origins, yet also retained something of its original template. Closer to the present, the IT revolution that began in Silicon Valley remains indelibly colored by its Californian origins. Paul Strathern shows how Florence, and the Florentines themselves, played a similarly unique and transformative role in the Renaissance.

Over 125 color illustrations highlight a comprehensive history of Renaissance art from a renowned art critic, placing the time in its historical and political context and arguing that the Renaissance grew out of the achievements of the medieval period.

Recounts the life of Lorenzo de' Medici, the Florentine banker, statesman, and arts patron, and includes his competitive and at times violent career in politics.

The startling truth behind one of the most notorious dynasties in history is revealed in a remarkable new account by the acclaimed author of *The Tudors* and *A World Undone*. Sweeping aside the gossip, slander, and distortion that have shrouded the Borgias for centuries, G. J. Meyer offers an unprecedented portrait of the infamous Renaissance family and their storied milieu. They burst out of obscurity in Spain not only to capture the great prize of the papacy, but to do so twice. Throughout a tumultuous half-century—as popes, statesmen, warriors, lovers, and breathtakingly ambitious political adventurers—they held center stage in the glorious and blood-drenched pageant known to us as the Italian Renaissance, standing at the epicenter of the power games in which Europe's kings and Italy's warlords gambled for life-and-death stakes. Five centuries after their fall—a fall even more sudden than their rise to the heights of power—they remain immutable symbols of the depths to which humanity can descend: Rodrigo Borgia, who bought the papal crown and

prostituted the Roman Church; Cesare Borgia, who became first a teenage cardinal and then the most treacherous cutthroat of a violent time; Lucrezia Borgia, who was as shockingly immoral as she was beautiful. These have long been stock figures in the dark chronicle of European villainy, their name synonymous with unspeakable evil. But did these Borgias of legend actually exist? Grounding his narrative in exhaustive research and drawing from rarely examined key sources, Meyer brings fascinating new insight to the real people within the age-encrusted myth. Equally illuminating is the light he shines on the brilliant circles in which the Borgias moved and the thrilling era they helped to shape, a time of wars and political convulsions that reverberate to the present day, when Western civilization simultaneously wallowed in appalling brutality and soared to extraordinary heights. Stunning in scope, rich in telling detail, G. J. Meyer's *The Borgias* is an indelible work sure to become the new standard on a family and a world that continue to enthrall. Praise for *The Borgias* "A vivid and at times startling reappraisal of one of the most notorious dynasties in history . . . If you thought you knew the Borgias, this book will surprise you."—Tracy Borman, author of *Queen of the Conqueror* and *Elizabeth's Women* "The mention of the Borgia family often conjures up images of a ruthless drive for power via assassination, serpentine plots, and sexual debauchery. . . . [G. J. Meyer] convincingly looks past the mythology to present a more nuanced portrait."—Booklist "Meyer brings his considerable skills to another infamous Renaissance family, the Borgias [and] a fresh look into the machinations of power in Renaissance Italy. . . . [He] makes a convincing case that the Borgias have been given a raw deal."—Historical Novels Review "Fascinating . . . a gripping history of a tempestuous time and an infamous family."—Shelf Awareness

The author explores the rise and fall of the Medici family, as well as the Italian Renaissance. Interwoven into the narrative are the lives of many of the great Renaissance artists with whom the Medici had dealings, including Leonardo, Michelangelo and Donatello, as well as scientists like Galileo and Pico della Mirandola. It also follows the fortunes of those members of the Medici family who achieved success away from Florence, including the two Medici popes and Catherine de' Medicis who became Queen of France.

Ruler of Florence for seven bloody years, 1531 to 1537, Alessandro de' Medici was arguably the first person of color to serve as a head of state in the Western world. Born out of wedlock to a dark-skinned maid and Lorenzo de' Medici, he was the last legitimate heir to the line of Lorenzo the Magnificent. When Alessandro's noble father died of syphilis, the family looked to him. Groomed for power, he carved a path through the backstabbing world of Italian politics in a time when cardinals, popes, and princes vied for wealth and advantage. By the age of nineteen, he was prince of Florence, inheritor of the legacy of the grandest dynasty of the Italian Renaissance. Alessandro faced down family rivalry and enormous resistance from Florence's oligarchs, who called him a womanizer—which he undoubtedly was—and a tyrant. Yet this real-life counterpart to Machiavelli's Prince kept his grip on power until he was assassinated at the age of 26 during a late-night tryst arranged by his scheming cousins. After his death, his brief but colorful reign was criticized by those who had murdered him in a failed attempt to restore the Florentine republic. For the first time, the true story is told in *The Black Prince of Florence*. Catherine Fletcher tells the riveting tale of Alessandro's unexpected rise and spectacular fall, unraveling centuries-old mysteries, exposing forgeries, and bringing to life the epic personalities of the Medicis, Borgias, and others as they waged sordid campaigns to rise to the top. Drawing on new research and first-hand sources, this biography of a most intriguing Renaissance figure combines archival scholarship with discussions of race and class that are still relevant today.

"This article considers the 2004 PBS documentary *Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance* in relation to its suggestions that the Medici family of Florence shared similar traits to modern Mafiosi. It analyses the cinematic influence of Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* trilogy on the documentary's filming, as well as that of Hollywood gangster films in general, the distinct references that the director used to illustrate the link between the Corleones and the Medici, and the implications of these with regard to the depiction of Italian culture and history in both fictional and non-fiction films."--Abstract on item. By the end of the fifteenth century, Florence was well established as the home of the Renaissance. As generous patrons to the likes of Botticelli and Michelangelo, the ruling Medici embodied the progressive humanist spirit of the age, and in Lorenzo de' Medici they possessed a diplomat capable of guarding the militarily weak city in a climate of constantly shifting allegiances. In Savonarola, an unprepossessing provincial monk, Lorenzo found his nemesis. Filled with Old Testament fury, Savonarola's sermons reverberated among a disenfranchised population, who preferred medieval Biblical certainties to the philosophical interrogations and intoxicating surface glitter of the Renaissance. The battle between these two men would be a fight to the death, a series of sensational events—invasions, trials by fire, the 'Bonfire of the Vanities', terrible executions and mysterious deaths—featuring a cast of the most important and charismatic Renaissance figures. In an exhilaratingly rich and deeply researched story, Paul Strathern reveals the paradoxes, self-doubts, and political compromises that made the battle for the soul of the Renaissance city one of the most complex and important moments in Western history.

A brutal murder, a nefarious plot, a coded letter. After five hundred years, the most notorious mystery of the Renaissance is finally solved. The Italian Renaissance is remembered as much for intrigue as it is for art, with papal politics and infighting among Italy's many city-states providing the grist for Machiavelli's classic work on take-no-prisoners politics, *The Prince*. The attempted assassination of the Medici brothers in the Duomo in Florence in 1478 is one of the best-known examples of the machinations endemic to the age. While the assailants were the Medici's rivals, the Pazzi family, questions have always lingered about who really orchestrated the attack, which has come to be known as the Pazzi Conspiracy. More than five hundred years later, Marcello Simonetta, working in a private archive in Italy, stumbled upon a coded letter written by Federico da Montefeltro, the Duke of Urbino, to Pope Sixtus IV. Using a codebook written by his own ancestor to crack its secrets, Simonetta unearthed proof of an all-out power grab by the Pope for control of Florence. Montefeltro, long believed to be a close friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, was in fact conspiring with the Pope to unseat the

